JEW AND GREEK : TUTORS UNTO CHRIST

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The Jewish and Hellenistic Background of the New Testament

By

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TO OUR COLLEAGUES AT
HARTFORD SEMINARY FOUNDATION

PREFACE

My friend Professor A. C. Purdy first suggested the writing of this book, which is the result of collaboration while we were colleagues in the New Testament Department at Hartford Theological Seminary. In the course of our teaching we found difficulty in recommending to our students any book of moderate size wherein they might find an adequate treatment of both the Jewish and the Hellenistic Background of the New Testament, without the danger of being unable to see the wood for the trees. We hope that the present volume may do something to supply that need. Professor Purdy has written the chapters on Judaism, while I have been responsible for the treatment of the Hellenistic Background. But as the final revision has fallen to myself, I must bear responsibility for any errors and inaccuracies which may have escaped notice. Our debt to those who have preceded us is apparent on every page, and our book makes but small claim to originality. Our aim has rather been to produce a volume which will make available within reasonable compass the chief findings of the experts who have recently enriched our knowledge of this field. We hope that the book is sufficiently concise to be of value as a textbook for College and Seminary classes, sufficiently untechnical to be of interest to the intelligent layman, and yet at the same time in touch with the latest results of scholarship.

G. H. C. MACGREGOR.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.
Christmas, 1935.

PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

This book was originally published in 1936 by Messrs. Ivor Nicholson and Watson as a volume in their *International Library of Christian Knowledge.* It became a war casualty when almost the entire remaining stock was destroyed in an air-raid on London, and the publishers shortly afterwards went out of business. By their courtesy the present new edition has been made possible. The reception given to the book when it first appeared, and the many requests on both sides of the Atlantic for its re-publication, encourage us to hope that it may still prove useful both as a student's textbook and for the enlightenment of the general reader concerning the world in which his New Testament was written. Apart from a number of slight corrections and some additions to the bibliography the book remains unchanged.

G. H. C. MACGREGOR.

University of Glasgow,
Easter, 1959

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INTRODUCTION: THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. *Alexander the Great*

By the time of Jesus the civilized world had become politically and intellectually a unit and the integrating influence was the spirit of Hellenism. The Hellenistic Age may be said to begin with the exploits of Alexander the Great. More than this, as Edward Freeman puts it,[1] " as the pioneer of Hellenic civilization Alexander became in the end the pioneer of Christianity." For our purpose the briefest summary of his triumphs must suffice.

Philip of Macedon, Alexander's father, was probably the first of all Western rulers to envisage a world made one. To him Alexander owed more than perhaps history has been willing to allow ; for Philip it was who both conceived the vision of a world-empire based on Greek culture and made it practicable by the unifying of the numerous city-states of Greece under the military hegemony of Macedon. What the father dreamed the son in actual achievement far surpassed. He reigned but fourteen years ; yet in that short span he altered, as no man before or since, the whole course of world-history.

The story of his conquests is familiar to all : how after Philip's assassination he received almost without a blow the submission of the revolting Greeks, and then in 334 crossed into Asia Minor as the acknowledged leader of a united Hellas against the ancient

[1] *Essays*, vol. ii, p. 204.

enemy ; how, after a sweeping victory at the Granicus, towards the end of 333 he routed Darius III at Issus in Cilicia, then advanced into Phœnicia where for seven months he was held in check by the stubborn resistance of Tyre, after which, reducing Gaza by the way, he was hailed by Egypt as deliverer from the hated Persian ; how marching into Assyria in 331 he finally crushed the power of Persia at the battle of Gaugamela, and then in the next eight years carried his victorious arms through modern Persia and Turkestan, across the Himalayas by the Khyber Pass into the Punjab, whence in 325 he sailed down the Indus River—" I think," says Arrian, " he did it to be able to say he had sailed on the Indian Ocean "—and then fought his way back again overland through Baluchistan and Persia to Babylon. And there in 323 he died, before attaining his thirty-third birthday, yet not before he had shown the possibility of an empire in which the barriers between East and West would be removed and the distinction between Greek and " barbarian " broken down, and thus all unconsciously had paved the way for Christianity throughout the known world.

What manner of man was he, and what was the secret of his power ? To those who would rank him high among the precursors of the Christ nothing is more significant than his sense of a compelling purpose, his almost Messianic consciousness of a royal, not to say divine mission in the world. He was convinced that the blood of Homer's great heroes ran in his veins and sought to mould his conduct on their chivalrous virtues even as, with a fanatical certainty, he knew himself destined to eclipse their triumphs. Like Virgil's oarsmen who *possunt quia posse*

videntur, he "could because he thought he could". And nothing can set a limit to such a spirit. Add to this the physical courage of the hunter trained in the chase of wolf and boar in the wilds of Macedon, combined with the disciplined intellect of the pupil of Aristotle; military genius and supreme administrative ability mated with the vision and imagination of the ardent lover of books (he reserved the richest coffer looted from the camp of the Great King to transport his Iliad across Asia); the dominant personality of the born master of men tempered with rare powers, when he cared to use them, of self-government and self-restraint—and there you have Alexander who at thirty-three found no more worlds left to conquer. "To me," writes Arrian (vii, 30, 2), "it seems impossible that such a man was born *without the divine*, a man like no other among men." For us in the light of history it is at least no more difficult to discern the divine hand wielding His instrument in the preparation of the world for Christ.

Alexander the Great is one of the greatest of all fertilizing forces in the field of history. From his exploits sprang a veritable harvest of new ideas, institutions, habits of mind; for by opening the sluices of Hellenistic culture, and allowing it to irrigate all those vast territories through which he carried his victorious arms, he let loose a ferment of vitalizing forces which rapidly worked towards a wide-world revolution of life and thought. To begin with, the world itself was henceforth a bigger place. As T. R. Glover puts it,[1] "one might almost say that he took his soldiers clean outside the map," and civilized humanity suddenly woke up to the fact that it lived in

[1] *The World of the New Testament*, p. 38.

a world far bigger than ever it had realized, and also far more united. Above all Alexander set the Greek spirit free to rejuvenate a dying world. For when the particularism of the Greek city-state had given way to the universalism of the Hellenistic world-empire, when even the wider boundaries which separated Hellene and barbarian had begun to break down, henceforth that parochialism, which above all else had hitherto clipped the wings of the Greek spirit, became a mere anachronism. Not even religion could escape the new atmosphere. Dr. Glover again puts the truth in his inimitable way : " Athena on the Acropolis is a long way off when you are bivouacked on the Bias ; the scope of Athena, like that of most Greek gods, had been too local. The Hebrew David complained to King Saul of those who would drive him out of the heritage of Jehovah into the territory of other gods ; and the same question confronted the Greek at the world's end. As he thinks of one world, one empire, one government, the little local gods look queer and old and very parochial ; and he begins to think of one god . . . who can make one universe of it as Alexander ruled one world. . . . God or the divine or whatever it is must have the range of Alexander." [1]

2. *Alexander's Successors*

With Alexander's death the keystone fell out of his empire and, as Demades, the Greek orator, put it, Macedon was like the blinded Cyclops in his cave, knowing hardly where to turn.

The empire at his death covered Macedonia,

[1] Glover, *op. cit.*, 60.

Egypt, and most of Asia from the Aegean to the Punjab, south of the Caucasus–Caspian line, the chief exceptions being Arabia and the north of Asia Minor, while most of the Greek cities of Europe and Asia were his subordinate allies. Once the rebellions consequent upon his death were suppressed a struggle for the supreme power started among his generals, chief among whom were Perdiccas exercising control in Asia, and Antipater in Macedonia and Greece, while by a fresh allotment of the various satrapies Ptolemy secured Egypt, Lysimachus Thrace, and Antigonus Phrygia and considerable adjacent territory. There ensued a tedious succession of shifting alliances and combinations, other prominent personalities being Cassander, Antipater's son; Eumenes of Cardia, the former secretary of Alexander; Seleucus, satrap of Babylon; and Demetrius, the brilliant son of Antigonus. The first stage of the struggle between the royal houses culminated at Ipsus in 301, when Seleucus and Lysimachus defeated Antigonus, who up to this point had seemed not unlikely to secure the whole empire. This battle definitely decided that the Græco-Macedonian world could not be held together as a single unit. During the next three decades the Antigonid Demetrius secured the throne of Macedonia (294), being followed, after a period of expulsion at the hands of Lysimachus, by his able son Antigonus Gonatas, the second founder of Macedon and the friend and pupil of Zeno the Stoic, while Seleucus and his son Antiochus I were meantime consolidating the position of their house in Asia, and Ptolemy Keraunos ("the Thunderbolt") was holding his kingdom of Egypt against his many rivals. In 279 Antigonus and Antiochus are seen

as co-defenders of Greece against the invading Gauls, a section of whom after defeat by Antiochus were settled by Mithradates in northern Phrygia—the "northern Galatia" of Pauline controversy.

Thus by 275 three dynasties descended from three of Alexander's generals were firmly established, the Antigonids in Macedonia, the Seleucids as rulers over most of the Persian Empire in Asia, and the Ptolemies in Egypt. A fourth European dynasty—not originally connected with Alexander—the Attalids of Pergamum was subsequently to rise in Asia, largely at the expense of the Seleucids; they grew great for a season by the favour of Rome, who in 212 first intervened tentatively in Hellenistic affairs and ultimately absorbed the whole of Alexander's empire, Egypt the last independent state coming to an end in 30 B.C.

The interest of the remainder of our period is largely centred in the encroachment of Rome upon the Hellenistic world. The intervening years from 275 until the first contact present the tedious story of a barren series of struggles, the so-called Syrian Wars, between Egypt and the Seleucids, conjoined with sundry clashes between Egypt and Macedonia—wars which undoubtedly prevented Greek culture from permeating Asia as fruitfully as it might otherwise have done. In Greece the period is notable for the growth of two great Leagues, the Aetolian League which began to expand in 279, and the League of the Eleven Achæan Cities founded in 251 by a young Sicyonian exile named Aratus. These two Leagues formed the nuclei of Greek independence over against the Antigonids and for a time expelled every trace of Macedonian influence from the Peloponnese, until

Antigonus Doson in 227 regained control by reconstituting the Pan-Hellenic League of Corinth as a federal instrument of Macedonian policy.

It is at this point that Polybius' history formally begins with the accession of new kings in all the kingdoms : in Syria Antiochus III, in Egypt Ptolemy IV Philopator, and Philip V in Macedonia. We are drawing near to the first clash of the Hellenistic world with Rome, and for a moment we pause to estimate the work of Alexander's immediate successors. How far, if at all, did they carry his great objectives to fruition ?

It is at least to their credit that they realized that out of the creative impulses evoked by Alexander a new world had been born and that there was no going back. Whatever we may think of the personal characters of the Successors and their calamitous wars of jealousy and ambition, they did hold firm at least to the dream of a united world. Hence each one obstinately claimed to be " king " not merely of his own section of the divided empire but " king " pure and simple, the implication being that if right were truly might he and he alone would sit on Alexander's throne. One may smile at such egotism and yet acknowledge that it may be an index to a changed world-mood which was of immense consequence for the coming world-religion. The divisive spirit of narrow nationalism, which is so often allied to religious intolerance and separatism, was less a factor in the centuries following Alexander than perhaps during any other era of world history. The conception of world unity, which reached its fullest embodiment in the Roman Empire and from it persisted even in the medieval world—a conception the loss of which

has been not the least factor in the troubles of our modern day—grew rather than decayed under the rule of the Successors. Though Alexander's empire seemed to have disintegrated, his big idea lived on. As Allin [1] puts it, "The breaking up of Alexander's empire . . . was like the breaking of the box which permits the perfume and ointment to escape. Hellenism became even more cosmopolitan." And when men feel themselves world-citizens they are being prepared for the world-religion. In spite of all the faults of the Successors, and they were many, when we think of the greatest of these princes—Demetrius "the Besieger", Antigonus Gonatas the philosopher king, Ptolemy "the Thunderbolt" and his still more masterful widow Arsinoe, queen over Egypt's golden age and honoured afterwards as a goddess, Pyrrhus King of Epirus, perhaps the most knightly of them all, whose chivalry the Roman poet Ennius immortalized—none will deny that they present a spectacular and colourful array. Among them there were really great men and able rulers, and almost all at least escape the fatal charge of being uninteresting.

3. *The Encroachment of Rome*

It was Philip V of Macedonia, so gifted and popular that he was known as "the darling of Hellas" and seemed more likely than any of his predecessors to succeed in unifying Greece, who was instrumental in bringing about the first clash with Rome. The Aetolians had again asserted their independence, and

[1] *Race and Religion*, p. 20.

an indecisive struggle—the so-called Social War in which Aetolia and her allies opposed Philip and his Hellenic League—ended in 217 with the peace of Naupactus, at the signing of which the Aetolian Agelaus warned Greece of the need of unity in face of "the cloud rising in the West". But the ill-advised Philip in 215 allied himself with Carthage in an attempt to expel the Romans from Illyria, the result being an alliance between Rome and Aetolia (212), followed by the First Macedonian War which ended inconclusively in 205. But in 202 the conquest of Carthage left Rome free to respond when in 200 Egypt, Rhodes and Attalus of Pergamum appealed for her help against Philip and the Seleucid Antiochus III ("the Great") who had formed a pact of aggression against Egypt and her allies. Though Rome as yet apparently had no intention of reducing the East, as a result of this intervention she becomes henceforth the holder of the balance of power in the Mediterranean basin, and it is usually Pergamum who is found egging her on against Macedonia and the Seleucids, who in general represent Hellenistic opposition to the advance of the Western Power. The immediate outcome on this occasion was the Second Macedonian War, in which Rome's ostensible policy was to make a free Greece her bulwark against Philip and Antiochus who, she professed to fear, were about to launch against Italy the united power of all Alexander's empire. After three years Philip was decisively defeated at Cynoscephalae in 197 by the proconsul Flamininus, and though at the Isthmian Games of 196 the Roman general theatrically proclaimed that all Greeks formerly subject to Philip or compulsory members of the Hellenic League

should be free, Hellas soon awoke to the fact that Rome's strangle-hold was upon her. Antiochus' turn came next. After a period of brilliant success at the expense of Pergamum, during which he occupied the whole coast from Cilicia to the Hellespont and even invaded Thrace, thereafter allying himself with the Aetolians with the battle-cry of the liberation of all Greece from Rome, he was trapped in 191 by a Roman army at Thermopylae, lost his entire force, and escaped to Asia almost alone. The following year his fleet was destroyed at Myonnesus, a defeat which marked the end once for all of the predominance of the Macedonian kingdoms at sea, while L. Cornelius Scipio with the help of Eumenes of Pergamum routed his army at Magnesia.[1] As for Rome, from now on she is admittedly the controlling power.

The policy of Rome at this time was seldom one of expansion save under constraint, and these early victories in the East were not yet followed by any formal annexations. Macedonia was taken definitely under Roman control only when it appeared necessary to station there a permanent Roman force to protect the city-republics of Greece against the southward

[1] The results of the peace which followed in 188 are thus described by W. W. Tarn (*Hellenistic Civilization*, p. 25): "The peace of Apamea altered the face of the Hellenistic east; Rome was now the predominant power, and in Greece itself no state was really independent of her. The time that followed was one of constant Roman interference; every weaker disputant, every person aggrieved, appealed to Rome, and Roman commissioners were perpetually travelling eastward; and in the cities the democracies, which stood for national independence, at least internally, now tended to look to Macedonia, while the well-to-do favoured submission to the wishes of Rome. Eumenes reaped his reward at the peace. . . . He grew great, but was everywhere disliked as being Rome's jackal, the traitor to Hellenism."

encroachment of Celtic barbarians. For this development, though Macedonia was not actually constituted a Roman province till 148, Philip must again bear responsibility. He had aided Rome during the war with Antiochus only to find himself ordered out of Thrace and Thessaly which he had annexed by Rome's leave. Piqued by this characteristic Roman ingratitude he planned to employ the Bastarnae, a strong Gallic confederacy on the Danube, and the Scordisci to invade Italy while he reconquered Greece. Though he died in 179 before the plan matured, his son Perseus continued to egg on the barbarians and to rally the democratic elements in Greece against Rome, with the result that in 171 Rome, instigated once again by Eumenes of Pergamum, declared war. For three years Perseus, aided by Roman incompetence, won a few minor victories, but finally was utterly routed in 168 by L. Aemilius Paullus at Pydna. The defeat marks the final downfall of the Antigonids, for Rome, departing temporarily from her Philhellenic policy, forcibly broke up Macedonia into four republics and heavily penalized the various national parties throughout Greece. Even Eumenes discovered that Roman friendship lasted just so long as it paid Rome to be friendly. He had aided Rome and thereby grown too strong ; his reward was to have the Galatians, who were a constant thorn in his side, declared autonomous by Rome.

The Seleucid house had meantime recovered in some measure from the disaster at Magnesia under the leadership of Antiochus Epiphanes, " the Saviour of Asia." He had lived 14 years in Rome, was her convinced friend and admirer, and experienced her characteristic " gratitude ". In 169 he had invaded

Egypt, then turned aside to Syria where he made those contacts with Judæa which rankled so deeply in Jewish imagination (see page 31), whence in 168 he returned to besiege Alexandria. At this point Rome, following her usual policy of checkmating the Seleucids, ordered him to quit, the senate's envoy G. Popilius insolently drawing a circle round him in the sand and bidding him decide before leaving the spot. Antiochus had no option but to comply, and though he spent the rest of his life in bitterness of heart fortifying his kingdom against Rome, his death in 163 ended all chance of the Seleucid empire playing further part as a world power.

After Pydna Macedonia passed through troubled times till in 149 one Andriscus (known as the " false Philip " because he impersonated Perseus' son of that name), putting himself forward as a national leader, invaded Thessaly and defeated a Roman force, but was finally captured by Q. Cæcilius Metellus and executed at Rome. From 148 Macedonia dates her era as a Roman province, the history of which is chiefly one of constant invasion by the northern barbarians.[1]

Greece proper was to make one last fight under the leadership of the Achæan League. In 148 Sparta had seceded, and when the League declared war Rome intervened by calling a congress at Corinth, where she again showed her " gratitude " for consistent support by ordering the virtual dismemberment of the League. In 146 the League voted war with Rome ; amidst a remarkable outburst of patriotic fervour their general Critolaus rallied the forces of

[1] " The Roman failure to keep out the barbarians contrasted badly with the record of the Antigonid kings in this respect " (Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 24).

Achæa, Bœotia, Eubœa, Phocis and Locris for one last heroic stand in defence of a free Hellas. But he was defeated by Metellus, the Roman commander in Macedonia, and when the remnant of his army took refuge in Corinth the consul L. Mummius after a desperate defence occupied and razed the city, the men being slaughtered and the women and children sold. Greece from 146 became a Roman protectorate supervised from Macedonia, but not yet a province. For a time at least the rule of the Republic seems to have justified itself. Freed by the *pax Romana* from petty wars and foreign politics the country enjoyed a measure of comparative prosperity. Athens recovered something of her material and intellectual splendour, while a cultural and religious revival is apparent in the renewal at Delos of the great quadrennial Delia, the founding of the Sarapieia at Tanagra, and the restoration of sundry shrines and oracles. Free Greek political institutions might have perished, but "all these things helped to re-establish the national consciousness".[1] But more and worse troubles were in store. The latent hatred of the conqueror showed itself when several Greek states, including even the peace-loving Athens, espoused the cause of Mithradates, the famous barbarian king of Pontus, in his struggle with Rome, and were engulfed in the general vengeance which followed. Athens never fully recovered from the vengeance meted out by Mithradates' conqueror Sulla, while a generation later Antony deliberately ruined and depopulated the Peloponnese in order to render it useless to Sextus Pompeius. Relief only came when in 27 Augustus reorganized the country as the

[1] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 36 f.

province of Achæa and Corinth rose from her ashes as the new capital. But for Greece as a whole the remedial measures came too late.

Meanwhile the Attalid kingdom of Pergamum had also passed over to Rome when in 133 Attalus III died childless and by a famous will gave her freedom to Pergamum and bequeathed his kingdom to Rome. The Senate somewhat unwillingly accepted the bequest, probably because their hand was forced by Tiberius Gracchus, who realized how useful the revenue to be drawn from the kingdom would prove in financing his schemes of agrarian reconstruction. Thus was constituted the province of Asia. To us the transaction is of interest chiefly as marking the institution of the system of collecting provincial taxes by the agency of tax-farmers, whose minions we meet in the "publicans" of the New Testament.

It was the war with Mithradates (88–84) which presaged the final ruin of Hellenism. True, Rome was now forced to the realization that having destroyed the Græco-Macedonian empires she must take their place as the champion of Hellenistic civilization in the East. But meantime Hellenism was to pass through a stage of dire distress. For a time Asia suffered hardly less than Greece, particularly from the extortion of provincial governors, but once settled government returned under Augustus the greater cities at least more than recovered their prosperity. One by one the other countries of Asia Minor followed Pergamum under the sway of Rome. In Syria the rule of the Seleucid house had nominally survived for just 80 years since the death of her last great ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, for in 83 after a long period of endless civil war Tigranes, king of a united Armenia, conquered

most of the country and ended Seleucid rule. There followed an interval of sheer anarchy, from which relief came only when Northern Syria was constituted a Roman province by Pompey. To this great organizer belongs the credit of bringing a measure of settlement to the East, and the year 63 marks the begining of a new epoch in the history of the countries lying between the Caucasus and the Mediterranean, including those districts which have a special interest for students of Christianity. In that year Jerusalem for the first time was taken by a Roman army, and the seven centuries of Roman domination over Syria and Palestine began.

Of the four great Hellenistic Empires only Egypt now remained. Over the fall of the dynasty of the Ptolemies hangs the glamour of the name of Cleopatra, with whose suicide in 30, after Antony's defeat the previous year at Actium, the last Macedonian line ended. Once again on the throne of Alexander sits one man—the Roman Augustus. He it was who stamped on the world the pattern which it bears in New Testament times. When he died in A.D. 14 the whole Mediterranean basin, East and West, was literally a Roman lake. The Western and Northern boundaries of the Empire were the Atlantic Ocean, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Black Sea ; on the East lay the Parthian Empire, to the South the natural frontier of the Sahara. Augustus' reconstituted provincial system is of special interest to the student of the New Testament, for we come in touch with its functionaries both in the Gospels and the Acts (see also pp. 306 ff.) He took under his own control the provinces in which the presence of an armed force was necessary, leaving to the Senate the more settled and peaceful

districts. The former were ruled either by *legati pro prætore* or by "procurators", both types of officer being selected by the Emperor, directly responsible to him for their stewardship, and often retained for years in the same province. The Senatorial provinces were governed by "proconsuls" chosen annually by the Senate and recalled each year. The result of the new regime was a restoration of security and general prosperity, to which the literature of the period, notably passages in Virgil's Aeneid, bears grateful witness. To a sorely harassed world had come the *pax Romana* which was destined to last with only brief interruptions for almost exactly 200 years.

4. *The Political Background of Judaism*

It will be advisable at this point to add a special sketch of the history of the Jews during the centuries which we have had under review. Indeed, for an understanding of Judaism as a religion it is necessary to extend the limit at each end of our period. The date 586 B.C. is epochal, while Judaism reached a definitive stage, not with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as Christian students are too ready to assume, but about the beginning of the third century of our era.[1] It is customary to designate these centuries politically by the names of the powers successively dominating the Jews as the Persian, Greek, and Roman periods. The Persian domination lasted to the conquest of Alexander (333 B.C.); the Greek period to the intervention of Rome and the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in

[1] With "the completion and general acceptance of the body of traditional law (Mishnah) redacted by the Patriarch Judah and promulgated with his authority". (Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 4.)

63 B.C. ; and the Roman period to the end of Jewish national aspirations in the revolt of A.D. 132–135.

We know almost nothing of the strictly political history of the Jews in the earlier centuries. There is no record of their history under Persian rule. Both Jewish tradition and modern criticism connect the beginning of the Persian period with the name of Ezra, a priest and scribe who came from Babylonia bringing the book of the Law of Moses. He stands in Judaism for the restoration of the Law. We have also the memoirs of Nehemiah, describing the rebuilding of the Jerusalem fortifications. Haggai and Zechariah contain hints as to the internal situation at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple (520–516 B.C.) and suggest the national hopes gathered around the person of Zerubbabel. But all our sources are more concerned with the religious life of the Jews than with their political relationships. Even the religious history of this period is far from clear.

With the Greek period our sources become more detailed. The conquest of Alexander affected the Jews as it did all other peoples. They were accustomed to foreign domination, but they had not experienced before the force of a definite cultural propaganda. How did they react to this influence ?

(*a*) *Palestine under the Ptolemies* (323 B.C.–198 B.C.).

Josephus tells of a friendly visit paid by Alexander to Jerusalem.[1] This account is now generally regarded as unhistorical, but we know that the relations between Alexander and the Jews were friendly. He assigned them a quarter in his newly founded city in Egypt.

[1] *Antt.* xi, 8, 1–7.

After the death of Alexander we are concerned only with the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. For a century Palestine was an Egyptian province. Josephus knew no history for this century. We may assume from later events that the rule of the Ptolemies was tolerant and that the Jews were free to develop their religion in comparative isolation. The houses of Seleucus and Ptolemy were engaged in constant warfare, however, until in 198 B.C. Antiochus the Great defeated Scopas, the general of Ptolemy V, at Panium in northern Palestine and the country definitely passed to the Seleucids.

(*b*) *The Period of Aggressive Hellenistic Propaganda* (198–168 B.C.).

At least three factors entered into the aggressive Hellenistic propaganda affecting the Jews in Palestine from about 198 B.C. : first, the general policy of the Seleucid kings ; second, the presence of active Hellenistic sympathizers among the Jews ; third, the definite attempt to root out Judaism as a religion.

The successors of Alexander were his " zealous imitators ", and especially zealous were the Seleucids. The Syrian cities, already denationalized, readily accepted the more superficial features of the new culture. . Cities on the Greek model, founded and colonized by the Seleucids, were developed on the soil of Palestine, e.g. Joppa, Gaza, Askelon, Dora, Apollonia, Ptolemais, and Scythopolis on the west of Jordan ; Hippus, Gadara, Pella, Dium, and Philadelphia on the east. Judæa was thus surrounded by a network of Greek cities. We must remember that the Jews formed only a tiny political unit about the

city of Jerusalem. In the rest of Palestine they were a Dispersion. Hellenistic influence, in the form of the Greek language and customs, was everywhere around them. The marvel is not that the Jews were affected but that they maintained their integrity in the face of such a pervading and invading culture. Many explanations have been offered to account for the stubborn resistance. The Jews came into contact with Hellenistic culture when they were fully conscious of their own, or the Jewish mind was temperamentally incapable of accepting Greek culture, the Torah and Plato's Republic being different and incongruous attitudes to life, or the Hellenism invading Palestine was brought by the soldier, the trader, the slave-dealer, i.e. it was a degenerate type, and the Jews rose in revolt against Antioch and the groves of Daphne rather than against the teachings of Plato. There is a measure of truth in all these explanations, no doubt, but the stubborn opposition of the Jews to Hellenism remains one of the most extraordinary chapters of history.

During the century of Ptolemaic supremacy, Hellenistic influences must have been felt in Jerusalem. Governmental relationships as well as intercourse with the Jews of Egypt and Cyrenaica were carried on in the Greek language. Rich families, such as the Tobiads, adopted foreign ways.[1] But we have no evidence of a definite propaganda. The faithful might deplore, but they were not roused to action against, these influences so long as the integrity of Judaism itself was not attacked. But the coming of the Seleucids changed all this. 1 Maccabees, a first-rate source for this period, informs us that " in those days there came

[1] *Antt.*, xii, 4, 1 ff.

forth out of Israel transgressors of the law, and persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles that are around us ; for since we parted from them many evils have befallen us. And the saying was good in their eyes. And certain of the people were forward herein, and went to the king, and he gave them licence to do after the ordinances of the Gentiles. And they built a place of exercise in Jerusalem according to the laws of the Gentiles ; and they made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the Gentiles, and sold themselves to do evil ".[1] Reading between the lines we may infer that the challenge to Judaism here was not that of a rival religion but of a rival culture. It was the challenge of secularism. The religion of the Jews was yet to be directly attacked, but a definite and aggressive Hellenism had appeared among them.

Antiochus the third (222–187 B.C.) had granted the Jews privileges ensuring them the undisturbed practice of their religion, and only a direct assault upon religious freedom could arouse them. This next step was inevitable, however. Jesus, who adopted the Hellenized name of Jason, was made high-priest in 174/5 by the new king, Antiochus Epiphanes. The privileges granted by Antiochus the third were taken away. " Jerusalem was given a Greek constitution, with a right for its citizens to acquire—doubtless not gratuitously—Antiochian citizenship also. A gymnasium was built below the citadel ; athletic young Jews enrolled as ephebi scandalized their pious elders by putting on broad-brimmed Greek hats. Priests hurried through their office in the temple

[1] 1 Macc. i, 11–15.

to take part in the sports. Many submitted to a surgical operation to efface the blemish of circumcision, which provoked the ridicule of bystanders when the Jewish youths stripped for gymnastic exercises. When Greek games were being held at Tyre in the presence of the king, the Jewish high-priest, Jason, sent ambassadors with a contribution for the sacrifice to Hercules." [1]

This aggressive Hellenistic movement within Judaism might have gone forward without producing a crisis but for a series of events that crystallized opposition. Antiochus Epiphanes, returning from his first Egyptian campaign (169 B.C.), despoiled the temple in the interests of his chronic financial difficulties. In 168 B.C. he was compelled to abandon a second Egyptian campaign by orders from Rome. Returning from Egypt, he vented his wrath upon Jerusalem. He tore down the walls of the city ; built and colonized with foreigners and Hellenized Jews a smaller city with a citadel garrisoned by mercenaries ; converted the temple to the worship of the Olympian Zeus, causing swine's flesh to be offered on the altar ; and undertook to extirpate Judaism by proscribing all its observances. By these acts he consolidated the political, economic, and religious opposition of the great mass of the Jewish people. No doubt he was moved by a like mixture of political, economic, and religious motives. From an administrative viewpoint, Antiochus committed the common error of under-estimating the significance of religion. The syncretistic spirit of the age and the enthusiasm of the Hellenistic party among the Jews blinded him to the intense and loyal Judaism which was unparalleled

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, pp. 49, 50.

in the world best known to him. Yet he was correct in thinking that only by extirpating Judaism could he Hellenize the Jews.

(*c*) *The Maccabees* (168–63 B.C.).

The Maccabean revolt is better known to the Christian student than any other part of Jewish history. 1 Maccabees gives us a stirring account of the heroic and successful resistance under these leaders. The revolt began at Modein, a small town north-west of Jerusalem. When the officer of Antiochus raised a heathen altar and invited sacrifice on it, Mattathias an aged priest slew both the officer and a Jew who stepped forward to comply. Judas, his third son, with his four brothers rallied the loyal Jews and organized resistance.

These brothers are known by two names, Hasmonaeans or Asmonaeans from Hasmonai, the grandfather of Mattathias ; and Maccabees, a name strictly applied to Judas only and usually interpreted as the "hammerer", although the etymology is in question. Judas resorted to guerrilla warfare, aided by his intimate knowledge of the country. Antiochus was unable to devote his personal attention to Palestine because the Parthians under Mithradates I were in revolt, but he sent three armies against Judas, who defeated them all. By these victories Judas opened the way to Jerusalem. He could not dislodge the Greek garrison in the citadel, but he recovered the temple which was cleansed and rededicated on 25 Kislev, 165 B.C., three years to a day from its defilement. Judas's career was not without reverses, but he maintained the revolt with success not only by military prowess but also because of internal difficulties

in the Seleucid empire. At Judas's death he was succeeded by his brother Jonathan (161–143 B.C.) who, by skilful political action as well as by military successes, added greatly to the territory and power of the revolutionary movement. Jonathan became high-priest (1 Macc. x, 21), thus consolidating his position of leadership. Under Simon (142–135 B.C.), the third brother to assume leadership, independence was won and the Jews began to date their documents from the " first year of Simon, high-priest, commander and leader of the Jews " (1 Macc. xiii, 41). He also captured and demolished the citadel, thus assuring the safety of the temple. Simon, with two of his sons, was murdered near Jericho, and the leadership passed to the second generation in the person of the surviving son, John Hyrcanus (135–105 B.C.). His rule was marked by prosperity and political success, but his quarrel with the Pharisees was to have disastrous consequences later. The third generation of Maccabean rulers included Aristobulus (105–104) and Alexander Jannaeus (103–78), sons of Hyrcanus, and Alexandra (78–69), the wife of Jannaeus. Under the first two the territory of the Jews was still further increased, and although Alexandra did not add to the territory it suffered no decrease during her reign. Her sons, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, the fourth generation of Maccabean rulers, were rivals for the throne. Hyrcanus was supported by the Idumean Antipater. We cannot here describe the long struggle that ensued, culminating in the appeal to Rome. Pompey heard the case in Damascus and awarded the high-priesthood to Hyrcanus, the royal authority together with the acquired territory being taken over by Rome. Antipater and his two sons,

Herod and Phasael, with their puppet Hyrcanus, secured what power was left to the Jews. Although Aristobulus and his sons, Antigonus and Alexander, made many attempts to gain control, the party of Antipater always managed to be on the winning side.

We must note two singificant aspects of the Maccabean century of triumph. First, the political achievement of the Maccabees. They enlarged Judæa until its boundaries were virtually identical with the kingdom of David and Solomon. The Jews of the return only built up Judæa, a tiny Judæa, never equalling in extent or importance the pre-exilic kingdom. The coast towns were all Hellenistic ; the towns of Transjordania and Samaria were independent ; Galilee—" Galilee of the Gentiles "—was wholly separated from Judæa. The Greek writers scarcely knew of the existence of this insignificant state. Herodotus never mentions it. From Zerubbabel to Jonathan, for a period of almost four hundred years, Judæa remained an unimportant state. The Maccabees built up a Jewish Palestine, forcibly Judaizing the defeated areas or repopulating them with Jews. Politically considered this was no mean achievement. To be sure, they were aided by the fact that the Seleucids and the Ptolemies were weak at the same time, but the rebellion was characterized by extraordinary heroism and, at least in its beginnings, by intense religious loyalty and zeal. Yet the Maccabees play no great rôle in subsequent Judaism. Why should they not rank with David ? This query leads to a consideration of the second aspect of the Maccabean century.

Along with the political triumph we have to note the gradual alienation from the Maccabees of the most

significant religious forces in Judaism. We shall discuss later the rise and meaning of Pharisaism. It is enough to note here that the Maccabean successes served to raise the question as to the real nature of Judaism. The more deeply religious Jews never fought against an overlord unless religion was the issue. This issue was clearly defined at the beginning of the revolt, but the very natural tendency of the Maccabees to pursue temporal power for its own sake was certainly one of the factors leading to civil strife under John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus. Klausner is convinced that Herod and Rome destroyed all that the Maccabees had built up,[1] but from our knowledge of the later attitude of the Pharisees to political ambitions as such we may assume that internal as well as external conditions contributed to the result. When the two brothers, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, appeared before Pompey in Damascus, there was present a third delegation representing the "nation" and begging for the abolition of the kingship and the restoration of the sacerdotal theocracy.[2] Rome and the Herods were not entirely responsible for the collapse of the Jewish state.

(*d*) *Rome and the Herods.*

Pompey entered Jerusalem in the year 63 B.C. He proceeded to strip the Jews of the gains in territory and power won by the Maccabees. The inland cities were separated from Judæa and put under a Roman official ; those on the coast were made free cities of the province of Syria. Hyrcanus was made high priest

[1] Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Bk. ii, chap. i.
[2] *Antt.* xiv, 3, 2.

but not king. There followed thirty years of war between Aristobulus II and his sons Antigonus and Alexander on the one side, and Antipater and his sons, Herod and Phasael, with their puppet Hyrcanus, on the other. Continued opposition to Rome and the Herods was made possible by the loyalty of many Jews to the Hasmonaean house ; by the civil war in Italy (49–30 B.C.) ; and by an alliance with the invading Parthians who put Antigonus on the throne for a period of three years (40–37 B.C.). This last move gave Herod his opportunity. He went to Rome, where at the instance of Mark Antony, supported by Octavian, he was made king by the senate. A fierce war followed, drenching the land in blood. After a long siege, Herod and his Roman allies took the city, storming the temple and slaughtering the Jews. Herod was established in Jerusalem where he was to rule for more than thirty years (37–4 B.C.). Klausner estimates that during the thirty years preceding Herod's triumph, more than a hundred thousand Jews, the pick of the nation, were killed.

Herod the Great is a difficult figure to appraise. Klausner, whose thesis is that the Maccabees built up a Jewish Palestine destroyed by Herod, regards him as a wholly unscrupulous and barbarous tyrant. There is much to support this view, but it is too exclusively that of a Jewish nationalist. Herod was a remarkable personality. At the age of twenty-five, when prefect of Galilee, he showed the boldness of the born leader. He seized and executed without trial one Hezekiah, brigand or patriot according to one's sympathies, who had attacked the Syrians. Summoned to Jerusalem to answer to the Sanhedrin, Herod overawed his judges by a display of armed force. There

were not wanting on that occasion voices predicting that Herod would be the undoing of them all.[1] We have noted how Herod won the aid of Rome in his quest for the kingship after the Parthians had put Antigonus in power. If he carried through the capture of Jerusalem with ruthless severity, he sought to conciliate the Jews once he came to power. He married Mariamne, whose father Alexander was the eldest son of Aristobulus II, while her mother Alexandra was a daughter of Hyrcanus. It was a diplomatic move, no doubt, doubly allying Herod with the Hasmonaean house. But Herod loved her as well, and although in a fit of insane jealousy he put her to death, her image haunted him for the rest of his life. He rebuilt the temple with great magnificence and at enormous cost. He encouraged the Pharisees and himself conformed to Judaism. He remitted taxes in bad years, and used his influence with Rome on behalf of the Jews of the Dispersion. He preserved the peace until his death. But any genuine reconciliation with the Jews was rendered impossible by Herod's acts in causing Antigonus and later the aged Hyrcanus to be put to death. Religion seems to have been free so long as politics were eschewed.

Herod divided his kingdom by will among his sons. Archelaus, named king, inherited Judæa. Antipas was named tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. Philip was given the territory to the north-east. Augustus confirmed Herod's will, but in the case of Archelaus it was to be in force for only a few years. Archelaus proved incompetent and tyrannous. A joint deputation of Jews and Samaritans accused him to Augustus, who summoned him to Rome and then banished him to Gaul

[1] *Antt.* xiv, 9, 4.

in A.D. 6. From A.D. 6 to 41 Judæa was ruled by Roman procurators. This period, again, is differently estimated according to the point of view. The rule of the procurators marked the end of political liberty. The Jews, at their own request, had forfeited the last vestige of independence. Never again save for a brief period was Judæa to be governed by a Jew. But from the viewpoint of religious freedom it is possible to paint quite a different picture. "Under the procurators the Jews had larger room to manage their own affairs in their own way than under Herod. The Roman administration had need of a representative and responsible intermediary between it and the people, and found such an organ in the Council, or Sanhedrin, which under Herod's autocratic rule had probably cut politically a very small figure. In this body, under the presidency of the high-priest, besides the heads of the great priestly families, lay elders, men of rank and authority, had seats; among both, probably, there were legal experts, Scribes. The upper priesthood was prevailingly Sadducean; and among the other members of the Sanhedrin the Pharisean party was represented. In religious matters the Romans did not interfere at all. Sacrifices for the emperor were regularly offered in the Temple according to the Jewish rite; but except for the project of Caligula to install an image of himself in the Temple, and an occasional *faux pas* of a procurator, the peculiarities of the Jews were respected. Cases between Jew and Jew were left to the adjudication of their own tribunals, from the village judges up to the high court in Jerusalem."[1]

The accession of Caligula brought hope to the Jews.

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 82.

One of his friends was Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great. Caligula's claim to divinity could not be acknowledged by the Jews. Agrippa's influence at Rome won consideration for them, and in A.D. 41 he was made king over all the territory ruled by his grandfather, of course under Rome. Thus for a brief interval (A.D. 41–44) the Jews had their own king. But after his death the procurators ruled once more. It was a troubled time. Commotions throughout the empire culminated in rebellion under Nero. Palestine was not unaffected. Unrest increased and the revolutionary party swept the Jews into the war of A.D. 66–70. The responsible forces in Jerusalem, including the Pharisees, attempted to restrain the revolutionary movement, and when restraint failed they sought to keep the situation in hand by organizing resistance and naming commanders to direct the war. Josephus, for example, was sent to Galilee. We shall discuss this uprising of the Jews in a later chapter. But in the midst of political turmoil the religion of the Jews was taking a definitive form in another than a political direction. The story goes that, while Jerusalem was invested, Johanan ben Zakkai, who is said to have received the tradition from Shammai and Hillel, left the city, made his way to the camp of the Roman general, and requested and was granted the right to establish a school at Jamnia. It is certain that at Jamnia, located on the coastal plain a little north of the parallel of Jerusalem, such a school was established before the final catastrophe. The significance of this seemingly incidental move can scarcely be overestimated. Johanan represented the conviction that Judaism could survive not only the destruction of Jerusalem but also of the temple ; that the future of Judaism lay with the school

and that the Law was the Jews' "portable fatherland". The future of Judaism belonged to the little group at Jamnia and to the ideas represented by them.

Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70 and the temple was burnt. The Jewish state was no more. The revolutionists held out until one by one their fortresses were reduced. In Egypt and Cyrenaica they continued their hopeless but heroic resistance. The Egyptian temple of Onias was finally destroyed. Under the succeeding Roman emperors the Jews had varying fortunes, now enjoying freedom and then suffering persecution. At length, in A.D. 132, Hadrian's proscription of Judaism aroused the Palestinian Jews to a final hopeless revolt. Bar Cocheba, proclaimed Messiah by the great rabbi Akiba, led the revolution. For three years the conflict continued. The Jews fought with great valour but in A.D. 135 the end came. Jerusalem fell, and the holy city was closed to the Jews.

PART ONE
JUDAISM

Section I

JUDAISM AS AN INDEPENDENT RELIGION

Chapter One

THE APPROACH TO JUDAISM

Judaism is the name usually assigned to the religion which developed after the fall of the Kingdom of Judah in 586 B.C. Before that date we speak of the religion of Israel. This use of terms is not only a convenience but it represents an important development in religious thought and practice. Christianity was born of Judaism in the first century of our era. It is as necessary to understand the Judaism from which Christianity issued as it is to study the heredity and environment of any significant personality. Just as an individual may react sharply from early influences, may exhibit traits not easily predicted by them, or may run true to his background, so an historical movement may stand in any one or more probably in all of these relationships to its environment. Our problem is to discover the relationships between Judaism and the New Testament. Since the New Testament contains our major sources for the origin of Christianity, this inquiry is basic to, although more limited in form than, the larger question dealing with the total relations of the two religions. In approaching this study it is important to put the question correctly and to understand the nature of the problem.

I. *How to Put the Question*

How is the New Testament related to contemporary Judaism ? The history of the answers to this question shows that it has been put in at least three forms, each of which must be considered briefly. The significance of each form will appear as we see how the form of the question tends to control the answer.

A. *How did Judaism Prepare the Way for Christianity ?*

This is the traditional form of the question. It is a legitimate form, but only after other questions have been asked and answered, for it is obviously question-begging. That Judaism was a preparation for Christianity is assumed, and this assumption tends to control the results. The familiar answer runs somewhat as follows : Judaism, in so far as it transmitted the prophetic religion of the Old Testament, was a positive preparation for the New Testament. The great prophets with their ethical monotheism and their Messianic hope pointed to Jesus, the Messiah, and to the religion proclaimed by him. But Judaism missed the way. Its God became a remote King or Judge. His revelation ceased to be thought of as a living, direct Word to men, and was embodied in a sacred Book or Law. Traditional interpretations of the Law accumulated, increasing in volume and authority until they could be known and practised only by professional scholars or scribes. The Law, encumbered by the Traditions, became an intolerable burden to the average Jew. In the nature of the case the prophet was superseded by the scribe who had leisure and inclination to devote himself to legalistic studies.

Religion became formal, traditional, dry-as-dust. Ethical and spiritual truths were overlaid by ceremonial practices, or were lost sight of in the intricacies of hair-splitting, technical debate. Meticulous observance took the place of vital religion. Judaism was a degenerate form of the Old Testament faith. The great mass of the Jews was inhibited from recognizing the Messiah when he came. Jesus won his followers from those Jews who were alienated from Judaism by its lifeless, formal character.

John the Baptist sounded again the prophetic note, the prelude to the mission and message of Jesus. Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and hopes. Religion, in and through him, was a living message of Good News, standing out in clear relief against a dark background of an inadequate, unsatisfying, if not definitely evil, Judaism. By its failure to be true to itself, by its failure to meet the deepest religious needs of men, by its denial of the prophetic religion culminating in Jesus the Christ, Judaism became a negative preparation for Christianity. Above Judaism was written, No thoroughfare for the spiritual advance of mankind. Where Judaism failed, Christianity succeeded.

Now this interpretation may conceivably be correct, in whole or in part, but it must be the result not the presupposition of our study. To ask, How did Judaism prepare the way for Christianity? invites some such answer. It focuses attention upon certain aspects of Judaism. It predisposes the student to seek for the weaknesses, the failures, the belated externalities that are to be found in the theory and practice of all religions.

Perhaps even more unfortunate for an understanding

of the New Testament, this form of the question assumes that Judaism is to be regarded as a "preparation" for a religious movement, and not as a religion in its own right. The student is deprived of the aid that his study of Judaism might render in illuminating the pages of the New Testament. He neglects the common elements in favour of the differences. This seems to enhance the newness of Christianity, but the price paid is too great, for he has no historical background for understanding the great assumptions of the New Testament. It was inevitable that this form of the question should fail to satisfy the serious student of the New Testament.

B. *What are the Genetic Relationships between Judaism and Christianity?*

Not only the false logic of the traditional form of inquiry but also, and more important, the vast increase in our knowledge of Judaism itself, has led to a radically different formulation of the question. What are the genetic relationships between Judaism and Christianity? Cannot Christianity be explained as the natural development of some one or more aspects of Judaism? What type of Jewish thought and practice did the new faith in its beginnings represent?

It has long been recognized that the obvious differences between the Old Testament and the New cannot be wholly understood from the Christian writings. These writings contain terms and ideas, e.g. the Kingdom of God, the Pharisees, the Synagogue, either not found at all in the Old Testament or else in a far less developed form. The doctrine of the Resurrection of the dead is a good example of these

ideas. This doctrine is assumed in the Synoptic Gospels, and only the questionings of Sadducees call forth a definite statement from Jesus (Mark xii, 18–27 and parallels). Since the Old Testament does not emphasize individual resurrection and retribution, and the New Testament assumes this doctrine, it is necessary to suppose a development in Judaism between the two Testaments. But this development does not rest upon mere supposition. It is confirmed by the literature of contemporary Judaism, which testifies to a common body of belief and practice shared by Jews and Christians alike. Some of this literature, the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha, was preserved for future generations by the Christian church, showing that from the beginning an intimate relationship with contemporary Jewish thought was recognized. But until comparatively modern times this literature was used as a foil for the New Testament. The rediscovery of the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha as revealing possible genetic relationships with the Christian faith was of great importance. Until the present century discussions about the relationships existing between the two religions have moved almost wholly within this literature.

The search for genetic relations on the basis of the literature of Judaism preserved by the Christian church brought the life and thought of the primitive Christian community closer to the Judaism of the first century. The most spectacular feature of this Jewish literature was its apocalyptic thought. Jewish apocalypses flourished for three centuries, the last of which corresponded roughly with the century during which the New Testament was written. Such ideas must have been popular with the masses, even if it is

difficult to believe that the average Jew actually read the more involved and abstruse examples of this type of writing. The conclusion was almost inevitable that apocalyptic forms of thought dominated Judaism. Now the New Testament has an Apocalypse, as well as passages in the Synoptics and in the Epistles, closely approximating to the Jewish form. Moreover, the Christian hope is obviously influenced by apocalyptic ideas even where the language is not so obviously identical. Is not this the line of development along which Christianity moved? Have we not in Jewish apocalyptic the clue to the major genetic relationship between the two religions? The fact that Judaism later abandoned the apocalyptic outlook strengthens the conclusion that the Christian movement differentiated itself from the parent religion in this way. We shall have occasion to discuss this hypothesis in a subsequent chapter. Here we cite it as perhaps the outstanding illustration of the attempt to trace genetic relationships with Judaism.

Our concern is with the validity and adequacy of this form of the question. Certainly it is valid. No student of history can object to this form of inquiry. But is it adequate? It is not adequate, both because of the limited form of the question and because, again, it fails to do justice to Judaism as a religion. Genetic relationships can only be examined after a much more thorough study of the whole field. The New Testament writings cover a period of approximately a hundred years. Judaism obviously bears an intimate relationship to these writings. But it is possible that the various religious movements, labelled for convenience sake Hellenistic, also influenced the writers of the New Testament. The study of genetic

relationships must be postponed, even in the case of so distinctive a Jewish type of thought as apocalyptic, until a broader basis of knowledge is available. The temptation to explain Christianity, or an aspect of it, by some one development in contemporary religion must be resisted. Ideas do not develop in water-tight compartments, and it is never possible to assign them with mathematical accuracy to this or that single source. While the study of genetic relationships has been most fruitful, it has frequently been guilty of special pleading which only an orientation of the special inquiry to the larger whole can correct. "Every separate incident or era in history must be viewed in a nexus larger than itself." [1]

Recent studies in Judaism emphasize the danger of seeking genetic relationships before the larger background is considered. Do the writings grouped in the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha really represent Judaism in the first century? Do they even represent all the Jewish influences that play upon the New Testament? Questions like these force us back to a study of Judaism as a religion in its own right. What is the place of Judaism in the history of religion as a whole? The growing recognition of the relation of each religious movement to the history of religion has led to a broader and more adequate method in historical study. This method, termed by German scholars the *religionsgeschichtliche*, is generally accepted to-day. Neither of the forms of our question discussed above is set aside by this form, but both are reorientated.

[1] James Moffatt, *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 122.

C. *What is the place of Judaism in the history of Religion?*

If we are to avoid the special pleading of the Christian believer on the one hand and of the expert scholar on the other, we must seek to discover the place of Judaism in the history of religion. The first question then becomes, not how Judaism prepares the way for Christianity, nor what the genetic relations betweenthe two religions are, but what is the essential nature of Judaism as a religion in its own right. Every religion has beliefs about God or the gods, including the ways by which deity communicates with men and their approach to deity, in prayer, sacrifice, sacrament, or inner experience. Every religion evaluates the world and offers salvation in or from it. Every religion has an ethic and some formulation of the outcome of history both human and cosmological. A general understanding of the character of Judaism as an independent religion is necessary before we explore its special contributions to the New Testament.

We are only now beginning to be aware of the importance of recent studies in this field. Modern Jewish scholars have made their learning accessible to English readers, and have definitely related the larger understanding of Judaism to the New Testament.[1] Christian scholars have also perceived the necessity of approaching Judaism objectively.[2] These scholars are teaching us that Judaism was not destroyed when the Temple fell in A.D. 70, but that it took its own way and lived its own life ; that the influences leading to the survival of Judaism had a long historical development and were living and potent in Jesus's day ; that Judaism

[1] e.g. Abrahams, Montefiore, Klausner *et al.*
[2] Schürer, Bousset, G. F. Moore *et al.*

cannot be summarized in a few complacent phrases, but exhibits the complexity of all historical movements ; that much of the prophetic religion was revived and incorporated in this religion, and that much of the dross was consumed by the fires through which it passed ; that Judaism was and is a vital religion in its own right and not just a preparation for another faith.

This newly appropriated knowledge brings Jesus and his teaching and the life and thought of the primitive church closer to contemporary Judaism. We now know that Christianity in its origins was not a bridge connecting the prophets with the first century over the chasm created by a decadent Judaism, but that the new faith stood in intimate relations with its own times. A large and complex body of literature, the Rabbinic writings, must be reckoned with in any attempt to understand Judaism and the Christianity that issued from it. Our problem is both complicated and simplified by the acceptance of these writings as sources. They throw light upon the New Testament, especially the teaching of Jesus, but render more involved the inquiry as to the precise nature of Judaism in the first century. Here we need only consider the restatement of the problem in the light of a sound historical approach.

II. The Nature of the Problem.

Unfortunately we are not in a position to describe with absolute certainty just what manner of religion Judaism was in the first century of our era, the century during which most of our New Testament writings were produced. What some Jews, perhaps what most

Jews thought and felt about their religion is reasonably clear, but no definite and final pronouncement is possible. This element of uncertainty is due to the character and date of our sources. The writings immediately preceding and contemporary with the New Testament, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, are obviously important for an understanding of the New Testament. But do these writings adequately represent Judaism? Certainly they do not represent the religion emerging in the following centuries as orthodox or normative Judaism. For example, the Jewish apocalypses, so important for an understanding of New Testament eschatology, and so widely used as evidence that the Jews regarded God as a remote Sovereign and Judge, had no place in later Judaism. In fact they are preserved for us because of Christian rather than Jewish interest in them. On the other hand the oldest writings preserving the teachings of the recognized Jewish authorities, the Tannaim, date from the end of the second century of our era. However, these orthodox sources are of such a character as to make it certain that they represent teaching much older than the actual date of the writings. Accordingly, on the one hand we have to rely upon sources generally earlier than the first century and representative of what became heretical Judaism, and on the other hand upon sources later than the first century in point of the date of writing and representative of what became orthodox Judaism.

The New Testament itself cannot be used as a complete solution of this problem. The Synoptic Gospels are among our best sources for a knowledge of Judaism in the first century. But no New Testament book took its present form before the break with

Judaism. The testimony of the Christian writings is therefore valuable as throwing light upon certain aspects of Judaism, but cannot be accepted as witnessing to the religion as a whole.

From the character of our sources, as well as from certain other evidence, we may safely conclude that Judaism was in a state of transition when the Christian movement began. No doubt Christianity itself is a witness to this transitional state, and perhaps one of the factors leading to a more definite crystallization of Judaism in subsequent centuries. We have, then, to avoid sweeping generalizations as to first century Judaism. This warning is particularly needed in the study of the Pharisees, over against whom the Synoptic Gospels set forth the life and teaching of Jesus, as we shall see in a later chapter.

The method of this study will be to characterize Judaism as an independent religion, on the basis of a survey of its history and in the light of all our sources, in Section I ; to examine the special movements and influences in first century Judaism, in Section II ; and to relate this knowledge more definitely to the New Testament writings, in Section III.

Chapter Two

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NORMATIVE JUDAISM

The purpose of this chapter is to trace in broad outline the development of the Judaism which emerged in the third century of our era in a definitive form. This type of Judaism is coming to be called normative Judaism, because it became the standard or orthodox Judaism of later centuries.[1] The main sources for normative Judaism are the Rabbinic writings, all of which date in their present written form from the third century and later. But these writings undoubtedly embody much earlier material and witness to a continuous development of the religion. Moreover, the Rabbinical sources afford a clue for the interpretation of other sources regarded as extraneous or heretical by later Judaism. It will be apparent that the picture of Judaism derived from this study is not in all respects identical with that portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels. For example, apocalyptic ideas play an insignificant rôle in normative Judaism, and a very important rôle in the New Testament. The existence of Jewish apocalypses, their numbers and volume, testify to the popularity of these ideas. That the apocalypses were ignored in the Rabbinic sources can only be used to

[1] The term "normative Judaism" was given currency by G. F. Moore in his great work *Judaism*. The author is indebted to this work for much of the material in this chapter and in Chapter III.

show that they did not represent the whole of Judaism even in New Testament times. In other words, there was a continuing stream of religious ideas and practices, flowing from the time of Ezra and beyond, and widening and deepening to form the Judaism called normative in the third century and after. This stream may conceivably have seemed not the main stream in New Testament times. Or to change the figure, it may have been coloured by ideas later rejected, but from the viewpoint of the continuing religion it is historically sound to attempt an appraisal of Judaism in terms of its own orthodox sources. Such an appraisal is also of importance for an understanding of the New Testament.

We have seen that two significant crises marked the political history of Judaism, the Maccabean wars and the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Maccabean wars stimulated political hopes and revived religious loyalty. It may be too much to say with Bousset that the religion of the Jews was in a state of dissolution before the Maccabean revolt.[1] But the Jewish state was small and weak politically, a tiny community about Jerusalem, unnoticed by contemporary historians. Circumambient Hellenism threatened its very existence and challenged the religion centred in the holy city. The heroic and successful revolt of the Maccabees fired the Jews with political zeal and religious fervour.

The events of A.D. 70 and A.D. 135 put an end to the political life of the state. But Judaism as a religion survived. Religion was never completely identified with political fortunes, else it must have perished with the state. Nor is it historically credible that the nature

[1] Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums* (1926), S. 2.

of the religion could be suddenly altered by these political events so as to emerge in the virile and developed form exhibited by Judaism in the third and subsequent centuries. There must have been a continuous development of the religion, a development affected by political events yet independent of them. Our sources confirm this development and enable us to trace with some degree of certainty the nature of it.

I. *Pre-Maccabean Judaism*

The destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. marked the close of an epoch. Never again were the relations of "church" and "state" quite like those of the earlier period, although in the first stages of the Maccabean struggle there was a superficial resemblance. The separation of the religious from the political life of the Jews began with the exile and continued with only apparent interruptions in the following centuries. Ezra, both in Jewish tradition and in modern criticism, is the figure about whom the earlier development centres. According to Judaism, he was the restorer of the Law in its entirety. Modern criticism is still occupied with tracing the origins of the civil, ceremonial, and ethical ideas associated with his name, but it remains a convenient one for identifying these ideas and observances.

Ezra stands for the building not of a state as such but of a religious community. The prohibition of foreign marriages, the development of the dietary laws and of civil and legal codes was regarded by later Judaism as the thoroughgoing attempt to apply prophetic teaching to the whole life of the Jews.

The catastrophe of 586 B.C. had been due to secularism, and the Jews, chastened by the judgments of Jahweh, sought to root out secularism in a radical way. To characterize the movements associated with the name of Ezra as exclusive and nationalistic is to misunderstand the motives within Judaism, however accurate such a judgment may seem from an outside viewpoint. It was the attempt to claim the whole life of the people for their religion. It is important to appreciate this motive, for otherwise we cannot understand the rise of individualism and its corollary, universalism, in Judaism. Not nationalism, in a strictly political sense, but the building of a religious community, was the aim of Ezra.

The Samaritan schism is to be understood in the same way. Superficially, it seems to have been the result of a bitter and narrow nationalism. Actually, the schism was caused by a deep-lying difference in outlook. By limiting the scriptures to the Pentateuch, and by challenging the central and exclusive place of Zion, the Samaritans opened the door to secular considerations in those areas of life not explicitly covered by the Pentateuch, on the one hand, and struck at the regulative factor in the religion—a single and central font of religious authority—on the other. We need not suppose that the controversy was envisaged in these terms. The Samaritans were not necessarily less religious than the Jerusalemites, and their claims for Gerizim had substantial grounds; but their position stopped short of the comprehensive idea of religion. If religion was to control the entire life of the Jews, a single focus and centre was necessary from which to disseminate and regulate it. Moreover, the prophets and the other scriptures were essential to

the expansion and development of the religion, just as were the traditional interpretations of the Law in the later period.[1]

According to later Jewish theory, this process of expanding and applying the Law to the whole of life—although by definition it was not a process but rather a restoration of the Law given once and for all time to Moses—proceeded in straight lines from Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue down to the systematic compilations of the rules of the traditional law in the Mishnah.[2] But we are not dependent on this late and uncritical theory. We have a writing dated with reasonable certainty about 200 B.C., and witnessing to this same comprehensive view of religion, in the book of Jesus the son of Sirach, known by its Latin title in the Apocrypha as Ecclesiasticus.[3]

Sirach is one of the most notable examples of the Wisdom Literature. It seems to be "a moral guide-book to right living", filled with ripe counsel for every-day life, a mine of information about social conditions generally. But it is much more than this. The theme of Sirach is that "all wisdom is the fear of the Lord, and all wisdom is the fulfilling of the Law" (xix, 20). Thus religion as embodied in the Law is at once the sanction and the source of wisdom in its comprehensive scope, i.e. for the whole life of man, practical as well as theoretical.

Of equal significance is the emergence in Sirach of the Scribe as a professional man. His function is to "concentrate his thoughts on the law of the Most

[1] Cf. Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 23 ff.

[2] Cf. *The Sayings of the Fathers*, Pirke Aboth, Herford, 1925.

[3] Cf. *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, by Gore *et al*: Part II, p. 79, The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, W. O. E. Oesterly.

High. He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients and occupy himself with the study of prophecies, and pay attention to expositions of famous men, and will penetrate into allusive turns of parables. He will search out the hidden meanings of proverbs, and will be versed in the enigmas of parables ".[1] The verses that follow emphasize the religious character of the studies of this ideal scribe. Here, again, stress is laid upon the scope and importance of the Law, requiring the attention of specialists who have leisure to penetrate to the full and deep meaning of the writings.

It should be noted that Sirach betrays no consciousness of the later controversies. He has no hope of immortality even for the spirit (cf. xvii, 27 ff.), and accordingly is opposed to the apocalyptists. He does not emphasize the Messianic hope, and has little to say about demons or angels. " The generality of his phrasing when touching the subject (of the oral tradition) and the absence of any consciousness of polemic interest in the matter indicate that as yet the issue of the authority of the oral law had not been raised. Torah has not yet become two laws, one written, one oral, but rather one law practised in the traditional manner ".[2] He is reverent in his attitude toward the temple worship and the sacrificial system (l, 1–24). There is no break between priests and scribes ; both are engaged in teaching the Law (xlv, 17 ; xxxviii, 33 f.). Nor is there any serious opposition to the Law ; the society reflected in his pages seems unbroken by inner conflict.

Sirach is thus a witness to the development in the importance of the Law as applying to the whole of life,

[1] Read the whole of this classic passage, Ecclus. xxxviii, 24–xxxix, 11.
[2] Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 9.

and to the rise of the scribe who was at once a layman, as distinct from the priestly order, and a professional, as requiring leisure for the pursuit of his studies. The controlling viewpoint of normative Judaism is discernible in Sirach, although particular doctrines such as the resurrection are lacking.

II. *The Maccabean Revolt as a Religious Crisis*

We have outlined the events and influences leading up to the Maccabean revolt and the political consesequences of it.[1] We must now consider the significance of this crisis for the religion of the Jews. In its inception, it was a deeply religious movement. Only a religious crisis could move the leaders of Judaism to sanction political action. But there was no alternative. Antiochus Epiphanes saw quite clearly that the religion of the Jews was the chief obstacle to his political ambitions, and he proposed to root out the religion as such. Our main source (1 Maccabees) deals almost exclusively with political events, but it reveals the religious nature of the revolt. Mattathias slew first a Jew who came forward to sacrifice on the heathen altar set up at Modein and then " the king's officer, who compelled men to sacrifice, he killed at that time, and pulled down the altar. And he was zealous for the law, even as Phineas did unto Zimri the son of Salom " (1 Macc. ii, 23 ff.).

Patriotic and religious motives could not remain distinct in a time of swift action ; they were merged into a single motive. The mass of the people fought for freedom without discriminating between religious and political freedom. But the Pious, or Hasidaeans, could

[1] See Introduction, pp. 32 ff.

only have been enlisted in a religious cause. When they rallied to the Maccabean standard the revolt became a crusade, and its successful issue was due not only to the complex of international events favourable to the revolution, but also to an almost incredible valour springing from religious fanaticism.

That this was the case in the early days of the struggle is clear from the refusal of the Jews to fight on the Sabbath and the consequent massacre (1 Macc. ii, 29–41). Moore points out that this was not, in all probability, solely a case of personal fidelity at any cost, but that it was joined with " the belief that such fidelity was the condition of deliverance of their people by divine intervention ", and that the observance of the Sabbath was " the touchstone of allegiance distinguishing the true Jew from the cosmopolite or the apostate ".[1] But it brings into clear relief the religious nature of the revolt, as the waiving of the Sabbath law in the interests of effective resistance illustrates the modification of the religious motive later on.

The success of the revolt distinguished again between religious and secular motives. The Maccabees began as religious revolutionists ; they ended as dynasts. The progressive and perhaps inevitable secularizing of the Jewish revolt was paralleled by a progressive and opposite tendency to define Judaism over against political ambitions. On the one hand, external expansion called for the development of secular policies ; on the other hand, it led to the formation of party lines. We shall discuss the rise of these parties in a subsequent chapter. Here we shall note the nature of the issue raised by political success.

[1] Moore, vol. ii, p. 26.

New conditions developed, not contemplated in the Law. Accordingly, the Law must be interpreted to meet the new situations, or else they must be left outside the scope of the Law. These alternatives were embodied in two parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Before the crisis Judaism presented a united front. After the successful issue of the revolt, Judaism developed the parties familiar to us in New Testament times. No doubt the great mass of the people belonged to neither party, but the future of Judaism was in the hands of those who saw the significance of the crisis.

Our sources, largely political in character, only hint at the importance and intensity of this struggle. It comes to light in the quarrel between John Hyrcanus and the Pharisees. Josephus tells us that the issue was the unwritten law. "The Pharisees have delivered to the common people by tradition from a continuous succession of fathers certain legal regulations which are not written in the Law of Moses, on which account the Sadducean sort rejects them, affirming that what is written is to be regarded as law, but what comes from the tradition of the fathers is not to be observed." [1] Whatever the origin of the dispute, and our sources do not make it clear, Hyrcanus who had been a disciple of the Pharisees broke with them and went over to the Sadducees. According to Josephus the mass of the people was with the Pharisees. Thus at the end of the second century B.C. the Pharisees were an influential party standing for the traditions as well as the Law, another way of saying that they stood for the comprehensive as opposed to the limiting idea of the scope of religion.

Under Alexander Jannæus (103–78 B.C.) civil war

[1] *Antt.* xiii, 10, 5 f.

of a serious nature broke out. Because of the character of the conflict it is assumed that the issue was between Jannaeus and the Pharisees. The multitude, according to Josephus, pelted him with the citrons carried in the festal procession, and accused him of being disqualified for the high-priesthood. The Pharisees are not mentioned by name, and no doubt other than deeply religious persons were involved in the civil war. But the immediate occasion of the trouble was the relation of secular and religious authority in the person of Jannaeus. The Pharisees are named only in the death-bed scene, when Jannaeus counselled the queen, Alexandra, to come to terms with the Pharisees in the interests of the security of the throne.[1] Alexandra harkened to this counsel and the Pharisees came into power and used it ruthlessly.

We have no record of the rôle played by the Pharisees in the strife between Alexandra's sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, but when the two brothers eventually appeared before Pompey in Damascus, there were present not only delegations supporting each but a third delegation representing the "nation" and begging for the abolition of the sacerdotal rule.[2]

These somewhat casual references are unanimous in their testimony. A persistent and growing movement in favour of the religious as opposed to the secular type of Judaism is apparent. No doubt other than purely pious motives, e.g. the democratic as opposed to the aristocratic, were operative, perhaps at times decisive, but it was the religious motive, the will to regulate the life of the people by the Law interpreted to apply to the whole of life, that was to prove determinative for the future of Judaism. Bousset

[1] *Antt.* xiii, 16, 2. [2] *Antt.* xiv, 3, 2.

has viewed the development of Judaism in this period under the categories, universalism versus nationalism.[1] This use of terms is justified by the final outcome but is too paradoxical for a clear understanding of this period. The Pharisees appear to be more narrowly nationalistic than the Sadducees. But their nationalism was not political except in a secondary sense, for they were not concerned to win a place in the sun for the Jewish state, and they never supported wars waged for political ends as such. Pharisaic nationalism was a means to an end, the creation of a people of God, as the necessary condition for the universal rule of God. The Sadducees by limiting the scope of religion to the written Law were free to cultivate relations with the surrounding culture in those areas not explicitly covered by the written Law. Accordingly, it is perhaps more helpful to state the issue as between a comprehensive and a limiting conception of the scope of Judaism. As we shall see in a later chapter, Pharisaism moved steadily toward a thoroughgoing individualizing of religion. Now the corollary of individualism is universalism, and Judaism as represented by the Pharisees was developing in this direction.

III. *Shammai and Hillel*

Warfare in ancient times seldom absorbed the attention of a people to the same extent as in our present civilization. " We can well believe that in the intervals of peace and even amid the disorders of war scholars steadfastly pursued their studies in Scripture and tradition, and pious men were as scrupulous in the

[1] Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*, S. 53.

observance of their religious duties as in happier times." [1] Later Judaism did not regard the Maccabean period as particularly significant; the Maccabean princes were not their heroes, for reasons suggested above. *Pirke Aboth* or the Sayings of the Fathers, a tractate of the Mishnah, sets forth the history of the entire period from Moses down to Shammai and Hillel, as a process of handing down the Law. From the time of Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue the succession was: Simeon the Righteous (*ca.* 200 B.C.), one of the last survivors of the Great Synagogue; Antigonus of Socho, who received the traditional law from Simeon; then pairs of colleagues in each succeeding generation down to the last pair, Shammai and Hillel, who mark the beginning of the Tannaite—the Tannaim were the successors of the Sopherim or Scribes—tradition. To each of these Fathers *Pirke Aboth* attributes "a pithy sentence which is, so to say, his individual motto".[2]

This is, of course, a highly selective and dogmatic way of writing history, and we cannot accept uncritically the list of names or the sayings attributed to them. But so did Rabbinic Judaism regard its history, and this view confirms our scanty source material. From Sirach and beyond an uninterrupted stream of influence, characterized by reverence for the Law and its development through tradition, flowed down through the centuries.

The last of the pairs, Shammai and Hillel, correspond roughly in date with the reign of Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.). Here we are on solid historic ground.

[1] Moore, vol. i, p. 57.

[2] Herford, *op. cit.*, or C. Taylor, *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, Cambridge, 1877, 1897.

Hillel was a Babylonian Jew who came to Jerusalem to sit under the famous pair, Shemaiah and Abtalion. Shammai was a native Judaean. They were the founders of two schools of Scribes. The issue between the two schools, growing into a bitter conflict, was as to the authority and method of interpretation of the traditional law. Sirach, as we have noted, did not know of two laws but only of the Law practised in the traditional manner. Shammai and Hillel witness to the prevalent acceptance of Law *and* Tradition. Shammai and his followers were content to accept Tradition in itself, but the school of Hillel was concerned to deduce Tradition from the Scriptures and to systematize it by rules of interpreting Scripture as its source. Moreover, Hillel tended to apply Tradition in a more humane and lenient fashion to the practical problems of daily life, as against Shammai's more exacting interpretations.[1] The school of Shammai seems to have been in the ascendancy during the lifetime of Jesus—an important consideration in the study of Jesus's relations with the Pharisees—but after A.D. 70 Hillel's followers definitely won the supremacy. "The teachings of both schools are words of the Living God but the *halacha* is according to the School of Hillel."[2]

Here, again, the Rabbinic view of the history of Judaism confirms the incidental references from political sources. We need not accept the view that Judaism was a purely religious movement, remote from the clash of political events. Surely the Rabbis were aware of these events. But we have sufficient evidence to establish their main position, that such

[1] Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 50 ff.

[2] *Jer. Berakot* i, 3b, *Erubin* 13b. Quoted from Branscomb, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

a stream of influence was continuous and important in Judaism, and that it eventually became the main current. Do these Scribes and their successors represent the main current in New Testament times ?

This question, of great importance for an understanding of the New Testament, can only be answered in the light of the whole complex of Jewish thought and practice in this period. Here it is enough to note that the Scribal view of Judaism was undoubtedly a significant element in that complex. Shammai, with his emphasis upon Tradition as such and with his severe application of Tradition to life, represents the same tendency to limit the scope of the religion that had assailed Judaism from without. Judaism could only claim the entire life of its adherents as it integrated written and oral Law into an organic whole, on the one hand, and as it was liberal and lenient enough, on the other hand, to permit the practical application of the Law to common life. Failure in either respect must have meant ultimate failure to control the life of the individual by his religion. The triumph of the school of Hillel ensured the triumph of this conception of Judaism. It is not necessary to suppose that the leaders in this scribal controversy saw the issue in these terms, but from our perspective we can discern a straight line of development from Ezra down to New Testament times and beyond.

IV. *Judaism and the Destruction of the State*

We have noted (Introd. p. 39) that in the midst of the rebellion culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) certain Pharisees led by Johanan ben Zakkai set up a school at Jamnia. Ben Zakkai,

who is said to have received the tradition from Shammai and Hillel, is described as an opponent of the Sadducees and a disciple of Hillel. The establishment of this school, however unimportant it may have seemed at the time, was of the utmost significance for the future. It meant at least these three things : the definite separation of religious from secular leadership, for the " High Court " at Jamnia did not inherit the political powers of the Sanhedrin it succeeded ; the elimination of the Sadducees from all actual leadership ; and the triumph of the school of Hillel.

From A.D. 70 to the war with Hadrian the Judaism represented by the schools of the Law seems to have flourished. Decisions with regard to the canon of Scripture and learned labours having to do with the rules of the unwritten Law and their formulation occupied the scholars. In A.D. 132 a revolt broke out, bringing to an end for a time these peaceful developments. It was occasioned by Hadrian's order that a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus be built on the site of the temple ruins. Bar Cocheba, " the star man," was declared by Akiba to be Messiah and once more patriotic Jews rallied for political action. But not all Akiba's colleagues shared his enthusiasm. " When he declared Bar Kozibah to be the Messianic King, Johanan ben Torta replied, Akiba, grass will be growing on your cheeks long before the Son of David comes." [1] The revolt came to a disastrous conclusion in A.D. 135 and the Jewish state was at an end. But Judaism went its way. Galilee now became the centre of the restored Judaism, and the legalism which was to find definitive expression in the Mishnah and the Talmud was still more sharply defined over against

[1] Moore, vol. i, p. 89, footnote.

the secular ambitions threatening it. Henceforth Judaism, as a religion, claiming the whole life of its adherents, and progressively individualized and universalized, became normative.

We have next to consider the nature and character of this continuing religion.

Chapter Three

THE CHARACTER OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGION

The thesis of the preceding chapter has been that the inner development of normative Judaism is best understood as a struggle between secular and religious interpretations of the mission of Israel. Were there areas of the life of the Jewish people outside the scope of religion, or was the religion to be interpreted and expanded to regulate the whole of life? This seems to the writer a less confusing formulation of the nature of the problem than the more usual emphasis upon universalism as against nationalism, or upon legalism as against the cult. Certainly the trend was toward a universal type of religion, but there was little conscious opposition to nationalism save in its political aspirations, and the trend away from the sacrificial cultus was so entirely unconscious that cultus requirements remained an important part of the legalism superseding them.

We have traced a line of development, exaggerated no doubt in later Rabbinic theory, yet clearly apparent, from the Hasideans through the Pharisees and the school of Hillel, which consistently emphasized the position of Ezra and Sirach that nothing in the life of the people of God could be alien to the Law of God, the complete and final revelation of His will. In theory such a religion was the religion once and for all time delivered to Moses, but in fact Judaism exhibits unique characteristics as compared with the religion of the

Old Testament. It is possible to characterize the religion as a whole without raising the special problems which necessarily emerge as we study movements and influences contemporary with the New Testament.

I. *Judaism a Revealed Religion*

It is customary to describe Judaism as a religion of legalism. There are good reasons for using this word, but it has connotations for the Christian tending to obscure the real nature of the religion. Legalism is associated with the externals, with the letter as opposed to the spirit, and with casuistry of interpretation. Although Judaism, and other religions as well, may degenerate into mere externalism, legalism in this superficial sense does not represent the genius of the religion. Judaism was a revealed religion; revelation was its formative principle.

But what does revelation mean, not in terms of definition, but as the formative principle of a living religion? We cannot do better than quote the exposition of a modern Jewish rabbi. "With the Hebrew religion an entirely new formative principle appeared among mankind. In the history of religion it stands for a revelation or, what is the same thing, a revolution, and as such it has been one of the most powerful forces of civilization and has become a world religion. Revolution—of course we are using the word not in a political, but in its intellectual and spiritual meaning—is not the same thing as mere reform. The latter aims only at a new form. . . . In revolution, on the other hand, we hear the voice of something that is fundamentally new. It is the expression of an entirely different way of thinking. It claims to be an absolute

beginning.... It claims to be not an evolution, but a new creation. (A religion of revelation) is able to stand up for the One Thing, and therefore to oppose everything else, only because it knows itself to be the working of the sole higher power that exists, the Word that came forth from God. A mere reshaping of something that exists, however thoroughgoing it may be, is felt to be merely the work of man. It is the perfecting of a talent, or of a moral code, or of a form of piety. It never claims to be anything else. But when the way is being prepared for something that is quite new and different, for the One and Absolute, there is a disclosure of the Beyond, a revelation. Into the heart of the man who experiences this comes that which is higher than he. He now knows something whose origin is hidden. His light and strength come from the Beyond. Confident of his prophetic office, he proclaims to men the message that has come to him from God, the Eternal." [1]

These eloquent words, however many questions they may raise in our minds, create for us the proper mood for appreciating what must always have been the strength of Judaism. The foundation of Judaism is the conviction that religion is revealed. Now revelation is a tenet of other religions, particularly of the religion of Israel. What was unique in the conception of revelation as embodied in Judaism?

II. *The Scope of Revelation*

On this point the Judaism of the first century was not united. As we shall see in our study of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the former extended the scope of

[1] Rabbi Leo Baeck, Berlin, in *Religions of the World*, edited by Carl Clemen, p. 265 f.

revelation, the latter limited it. Yet the main stream of Judaism, as represented by the Pharisees, comprehended the whole of life under revelation. " The whole of religion was revealed—' nothing was kept back in heaven '—and the whole content of revelation was religion. What man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man, He has made known in one form or another by revelation." [1] Much has been made by Christian apologists of the fact that the age of revelation in the sense of fresh disclosures of the will of God was regarded as at an end. Are we to infer that Judaism was static and backward-looking ? To draw this inference is to misunderstand the genius of Judaism. To be sure, the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from Israel, but this was interpreted as due not to the truncated character of revelation but to the glorious fact of its completion. The end meant the goal, the perfection of revelation. The corollary of this complete and final doctrine of revelation was the bringing of all life under control of the revealed will of God. God had a Word, transmitted in written or oral form, for each aspect of life however trivial. There could logically be no distinction between the sacred and the secular ; our terms ethical and moral, as set over against ceremonial and ritual, had no meaning in Judaism. It is an anomaly to speak of the social or the ethical implications of this religion, because Judaism held that social and ethical as well as " religious " relations were explicit rather than implicit in revelation. In its main developments Judaism represents, accordingly, perhaps the most thoroughgoing attempt in all history to order the whole of life by religion. But how was it possible to reconcile the

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 112.

idea of a revelation, given once and for all time in its complete form, with the swiftly changing human scene in the first century, not to speak of the natural exigencies of life? The answer is to be found in the form of revelation.

III. *The Form of Revelation*

This basic doctrine of revelation was comprehended under the term Torah, an inclusive term translated "law", in the first instance because the Greek translation of the books of Moses rendered the Hebrew, *Ha-Torah*, The Torah, as ὁ νόμος. The English expression, "the Law," has continued to be used, largely for want of a better single term. Even the books of Moses contained much besides legal rulings, and Torah included not only the written code, *Ha-Torah*, but the "accompanying interpretative and supplementary tradition" transmitted orally down to the third century of our era.[1] We have noted that Sirach as early as 200 B.C. witnesses to the growth of tradition as expanding and applying the Written Law to include all wisdom without any consciousness of Tradition versus Law; that the Pharisees were charged by Josephus with having delivered to the common people by tradition certain legal rulings not written in the Law; that the Sadducees made the acceptance of Tradition an issue; and that the schools of Shammai and Hillel, accepting Tradition *and* Law as Torah, differed as to the relation existing between the two forms and as to the method of applying Torah to life. Here we need only indicate in general terms what Torah was coming to mean in the first century. God had given specific commands

[1] Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 20 f.

to Adam, Noah, Abraham and the Patriarchs ; to Moses He gave the complete revelation of His will ; the prophets repeated, explained, emphasized and applied this revelation, but they added nothing new. What might have seemed new in the succeeding centuries was only apparently so, when viewed in the light of the written code, but actually it was as old as the Pentateuch itself. For the revelation was embodied in part in writing, and in part it was transmitted orally from generation to generation in unbroken succession down to the schools of the Law in which Tradition was defined, formulated and systematized. The Torah, including both written and oral teaching, was thus comprehensive in scope, absolute in authority, and exhaustive of the divine revelation.

One must saturate oneself with this conception of revelation, admittedly uncongenial to most moderns, if he is to understand the genius of Judaism as a continuing religion. It was a powerful way of dealing with the age-old problem of the permanent and the passing in human life. Otherwise he will be tempted to think of the Scribes as mere "freaks" who developed an unnatural and sterile interest in hair-splitting interpretations of Torah. No doubt they were as keen as any modern chemist seeking to identify an unknown element, and certainly they were inspired by the loftiest possible motive. Must they not have known, we are tempted to ask with our perspective and our concept of development, that the doctrines and observances they discovered by ingenious methods of interpretation to be inherent in the written Law were actually in many instances different and new as compared with the older religion of Israel ? We may answer that hypocrisy is never a satisfying explanation

of so virile and persistent a movement ; that the new is never wholly new and the old never wholly old in the history of thought ; and that the new factors appearing in Judaism came in by a process of development peculiarly suited to the view that actually there was no development. Nevertheless, the facts warrant a further discussion of the relation of revelation and development in Judaism.

IV. *New Doctrines and Emphases in Judaism: Revelation and Development.*

Theoretically, the doctrine of revelation as held in Judaism permitted no possibility of development. Actually, Judaism represents an important development of the religion of Israel, and a development of the greatest significance for an understanding of Christianity. Let us consider one aspect, perhaps the most important, of this development ; the emphasis upon the individual in Judaism. The mission and message of the prophets was to the nation. They stressed the responsibility of the nation as a whole and the judgment of God upon the nation. National repentance alone could avert this judgment. The break-up of the national state confirmed the prophetic message. With the destruction of the state, religion became less a " matter of course " and more a " matter of choice ". Jeremiah and Ezekiel addressed this new situation and the individual emerged into importance. Now Jesus keys his teaching to the individual and the Kingdom of God, not to the nation. But in respect to the significance of the individual there is no such chasm separating Jeremiah and Ezekiel from the Judaism of Jesus's day as Christians

are apt to assume. On the contrary, Judaism moved steadily, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the direction of the individualizing of religion. This is abundantly proved by the very emphasis upon the Law which could only be practised by the individual, the Law that followed the individual into all the areas of his life, private as well as public, in a fashion not possible when the religion consisted mainly of the observance of group rites and ceremonies. Sin and repentance were similarly individualized by the emphasis upon Torah. Most obvious of all, the doctrine of resurrection and retribution, so characteristic of Judaism as compared with the religion of Israel, individualized the whole outlook for the future. We are not to think that Judaism abandoned the national hope, but that the individual emerged in the religion as definitely as in the New Testament writings. Nothing could be farther from the truth than the assertion, still too common among Christian apologists, that Judaism regarded the nation as the unit while Christianity discovered the individual, however distinctive Christian teaching about the individual may prove to be.

A single general consideration will serve to confirm this development in Judaism, which Christianity inherited and in turn developed in its own way. Why and how did Judaism survive the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 ? Because the centre of the religion had already shifted from the Temple to the home and the synagogue before that catastrophe. The home with its domestic rites, table blessings, private prayers and parental instructions, and the synagogue with its religious instruction and worship, supplemented by the more advanced schools, had already in fact

if not in theory become the centre of Judaism. "Cessation of sacrifice, however deeply it was deplored, caused no crisis." Sacrifice, though divinely ordained, was coming to be regarded not as an *opus operatum* but as related to repentance and forgiveness. "The interpreters of the Law taught that the promises of divine forgiveness attached to the prescribed sacrifices and expiations, including those of the Day of Atonement, contain the implicit conditions of repentance, and when sacrifices and expiations ceased with the destruction of the Temple, that repentance itself sufficed." [1]

To be sure, this process of individualizing the religion went forward wholly within the conception of revelation as a final and completed fact. The means for an actual development were at hand in the two-fold nature of Torah, as written and oral, and it was the oral Tradition which was flexible enough to permit the inclusion of new ideas and new emphases without calling in the concept of development as such.

V. *Unique Characteristics of Judaism*

At the risk of repetition we must restate at this point the unique characteristics of Judaism, for it is essential to the understanding of the New Testament to grasp clearly the character of the religion from which it separated. To describe this faith as belief in a far-away God, whose will was to be known and observed only by slavish observance of a static code of laws manipulated by specialists so as to yield a burdening mass of meticulous requirements, is to caricature not to portray Judaism. Yet such a caricature has

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 114.

commonly, even if innocently, been accepted in Christian circles as the true picture of Judaism. One need not accept the Jewish position to appreciate the true genius of the religion, and to acknowledge that Judaism was never this.

Emphasis upon the Law (Torah), both written and oral, at once the product and the cause of its unique doctrine of revelation, was the *raison d'être* of Judaism. We may deplore the emphasis and point out the inherent weaknesses or the peculiar temptations to which such a view of religion was liable, but we must acknowledge the splendid and inclusive sweep of the conception, perhaps the most courageous and thorough-going attempt in history to control the whole behaviour of man by his religion. For the emphasis was laid upon observance, producing in Judaism a marked tolerance in matters of belief and an equally marked intolerance in matters of observance. The domestic and synagogue duties and the dietary laws were of primary importance ; religion was a way of living, not just a way of thinking or feeling. In fact community of observance even more than unity of belief, in any creedal sense, was mainly responsible for the survival of Judaism.

This central emphasis upon revelation embodied in Torah issued inevitably in a new individualism. The doctrines of God, sin, repentance, forgiveness, and the whole eschatology of Judaism reveal the decided shift in viewpoint from the older religion of Israel. It will be more useful to discuss this doctrinal development in connection with the Pharisees (Chapter IV). Here we may well ask if the emergence of the individual in Judaism was due in any measure to the tidal emphasis on individualism and universalism

in the Hellenistic world. Of all the peoples affected by the fertilizing ideas associated with the career of Alexander the Great, the Jews seem to have been least receptive, most stubborn and exclusive. Their development moves in logical lines from premises peculiar to themselves ; yet in subtle and indirect ways they may have felt the force of these circumambient influences. In any case Jewish individualism and Jewish universalism formed a part of the great complex of Eastern thought and feeling introduced into the Western world from the time of Alexander on, although the special Jewish type of religion was perhaps the least flexible of these Oriental influences.

In the remainder of this chapter we shall consider Judaism as revealed by its two outstanding religious institutions : temple and synagogue.

VI. *The Temple and its Worship*

Ezra's great aim was the restoration of the Temple and its worship. The Temple maintained its place of central significance throughout the pre-Maccabean period ; its rescue from pagan defilement was a Maccabean objective ; indeed, it suffered no obvious loss of prestige down to its destruction in A.D. 70. Nowhere does Judaism seem more paradoxical than in the place given to the Temple and the Temple cult, for theoretically it maintained its pre-eminence but actually it was gradually supplanted by the very Torah whose regulations so largely enforced the sacrificial system. We must examine this apparent paradox.

Pre-Maccabean Judaism centred about the Temple and its worship. The Jews constituted a " Temple congregation " rather than a true state. The whole

people, or at any rate their representatives, could assemble in Jerusalem to participate in the worship, to decide matters of moment, to organize their common life about a single focus. They had lost everything belonging to a nation save only the Temple and its worship. All our sources stress the importance of the priesthood : the high-priests combined secular and religious leadership ; the lists of exiles in Ezra and Nehemiah, however inaccurate, name one priest for every six laymen, showing the viewpoint of the writers ; Chronicles emphasizes the history and significance of the Temple ; and even Sirach, devoted to Wisdom, is nevertheless enthusiastic about the Temple and the high-priest. The immediate result of the Maccabean ascendancy was an enhanced importance for the Temple, since the Maccabean leaders combined the high priesthood with the secular leadership, John Hyrcanus, for example, being praised as uniting in his person the offices of prince, high-priest, and prophet. Jerusalem and the Temple symbolized the dramatic achievement of Judaism under its revolutionary princes even for the scattered Jews of the Dispersion. Whether a Jew lived in Jerusalem, elsewhere in Palestine, or in some far corner of the earth, he could think of the sacrifices offered for him on the holy hill of Zion. According to the Mishnah an elaborate organization of twenty-four courses of priests was perfected, each course a sort of standing committee for a section of Jews to bind them to the Temple. Vast numbers of the faithful from all parts of the empire came up to Jerusalem to attend the yearly feasts, Josephus reckoning, no doubt with great exaggeration, that two million seven hundred thousand persons celebrated the Passover in the year A.D. 63.[1]

[1] *Jewish War*, vi, ix, 3.

Superficially considered, the Temple seemed never more secure and central than in the Maccabean period, yet Judaism began, in fact, to separate itself from the Temple in this very time. What were the causes leading to this inner cleavage? First, the increasing distinction between priest and people, contributed to by the very emphasis upon and elaboration of the Temple worship, resulted in the creation of a priestly aristocracy, allied to the Maccabean house, and alienated the mass of the Jews, who henceforth followed the Pharisees. Second, the type of piety taught by the Pharisees, a piety based on the Law itself and not merely upon the cult prescribed by the Law, subtly shifted the inner centre of the religion. Third, the geographical factor, for however near the Temple was to the hearts of all loyal Jews, it was nevertheless not easily accessible to the vast majority, and the synagogue was everywhere at hand. The shift from the Temple was the more certain because it was neither abrupt nor deliberate. Propaganda against the Temple would have aroused opposition, and there is no evidence of such a propaganda, if we except certain disparagements of the second temple as compared with the first.[1] The Law indeed enforced the sacrificial obligations, and prophetic arraignments of sacrifice were interpreted to mean not the abolition of sacrifice as such but the necessity of repentance as the informing motive in sacrifice. Yet the emphasis upon Holy Scripture, the various discussions leading to the formation of the canon, and the development of Tradition—all this worked steadily against the solitary supremacy of the Temple and its worship. The Holy Book was the people's book in a sense that

[1] Cf. Tobit xiv, 5; 1 Enoch lxxxix, 73; Assumption of Moses vii.

the Temple, both because of its geographical fixity and because of the elaboration of its ritual necessitating a professional priesthood, could never again be the people's Temple. The Law became indeed the Jews' "portable fatherland," mightier than the cult prescribed by it.

VII. *The Significance of the Synagogue in Judaism*

How did the Pharisees, popularly known to us as legalists, and the Scribes, Biblical scholars whose labours must have been somewhat removed from the lire of common folk, get such a grip on the mass of the Jewish people that they won out in their struggles with John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus, with the Sadducees and the priestly aristocracy, and with the disintegrating influences of surrounding Hellenism? Not alone because of their stubborn adherence to principle, but also and perhaps mainly because they made use of an institution unparalleled in its effectiveness in the contemporary world. This institution was the synagogue. The ancient Mediterranean world had religions centring in the household and religions maintained by priesthoods, but it offers no true parallel to the religion of the synagogue and the school.

The synagogue belonged to the people. Its officials were a president and a kind of glorified janitor, *hazzan*, both laymen. Priests were not excluded and might be invited to share in the leadership of the service, but rather as peculiarly qualified persons than as professionals, for the synagogue had no sacrifice or offering. The services centred in a body of sacred scriptures containing both the principles of religion and the regulations for carrying these principles

into practice in the common life. Persons who were qualified to expound and apply Torah to this common life, conspicuously the scribes, naturally led the thought and worship of the synagogue, yet the scribes must have been held to some sort of contact with ordinary problems by the popular and democratic character of the institution itself, at least in its earlier stages.

The devout Jew continued to look to the Temple and after its destruction to hope for its restoration ; he was not conscious of the supplanting of the one institution by the other. Indeed, the synagogue with its prayers and responses, directly influenced by the temple worship, reminded every Jew of the Temple itself. But the synagogue actually became the surrogate for the Temple, mediating by its very likenesses the separation of the religion from the Temple.

The origin of the synagogue is unknown. Unless Psalm lxxiv, 8 refers to it, there is no reference to this institution in Jewish writings preceding the Christian era ; yet it was firmly established in the first century as a place for public instruction and for worship embodying such instruction as its central feature. Perhaps the silence of our sources is due to the fact that the synagogue had a spontaneous rather than a planned origin, and was not intended to be a permanent institution but a substitute for the Temple. By the first century, however, synagogues were to be found wherever there were Jews enough to maintain them, even in Jerusalem itself (cf. Acts vi, 9 ; xxiv, 12).

Detailed information as to the character of synagogal services comes mainly from sources later than the New Testament writings, but we know that the Pentateuch was read and translated by fixed rules into the common speech—in the Dispersion, the Septuagint translation

—that selections from the prophets were also read (cf. Luke iv, 17 ; Acts xiii, 15), and that an address designed to explain and apply the passage might also be given. We assume that prayers and responses also formed part of the service, as in later times. Apparently anyone might be asked to give the address, although in practice persons of standing who were versed in the scriptures would naturally perform this office. A priest or an elder might speak ; Jesus and Paul are reported to have taught in the synagogue ; but the scribes, in the nature of the case, would be the most frequent expositors. That scribal teaching was the norm is indicated by the reference to Jesus to the effect that " he taught them . . . not as the scribes " (Mark i, 22).

The effectiveness of instruction in the synagogue is suggested by the fact that Jesus, who grew up in an obscure little town not even mentioned by writers outside the New Testament, quotes or alludes to the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Psalms, and that Paul could assume a knowledge of the scriptures in the Hellenistic synagogues.

We may well conclude this brief survey of the character of Judaism as a religion with Moore's remark that " a consequence of the idea of revealed religion which was of the utmost moment in all the subsequent history of Judaism was the endeavour to educate a whole people in its religion ".[1] Synagogue and school were the instruments for the tremendous undertaking, and they are organically related to the whole view of religion summarized in this chapter.

Sirach, the Scribes, the Pharisees, Hillel, the Synagogue—these are the parties, persons, and the

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 281.

institution standing out in confirmation of that development in Judaism which was to become normative, the development which was to take definitive form in the Rabbinic writings. That such a movement actually took place cannot be questioned, and that it was of the utmost significance for the beginnings of Christianity is becoming equally apparent. But if we cannot judge Judaism fairly by movements and tendencies later branded as heretical or extraneous, no more can we assess the background of the New Testament with accuracy in terms of a later Jewish orthodoxy. Accordingly we must examine in Section II the whole complex of influences and movements in Judaism as presented by our sources.

SECTION II

MOVEMENTS AND INFLUENCES IN JUDAISM

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

We have now to examine the more important movements and influences within Judaism in the first century. Readers of the New Testament will think at once of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Now the Pharisees represented that interpretation of Judaism which became the normative Judaism characterized in the preceding chapters ; yet it is necessary to treat Pharisaism as a special movement within the religion, because in the century during which Christianity and the New Testament had their beginnings they did not represent the whole of Judaism, but only one interpretation, even if the most important, of that religion. The Sadducees play an insignificant rôle in the New Testament writings ; indeed there is but one clear reference to them in the Gospels (Mark xii, 18, and the parallels in Matthew and Luke). " The high priests who were Sadducees are referred to in the gospels, but not under their party designation." [1] The Sadducees as a party had lost influence with the people before the first century of our era. Nevertheless, it is convenient to include them, because

[1] Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 19 note.

their origin was due to the same conditions that gave rise to the Pharisees, and it is impossible to characterize one movement apart from the other, Pharisees and Sadducees representing different solutions of the same problem in Judaism.

I. *Meaning of the Names*

To anyone acquainted with the origin and present meaning of the names of modern religious sects, e.g. Methodists, Quakers, it will be no surprise to learn that the names Pharisee and Sadducee throw little if any light upon these sects.

The name "Pharisee" is derived from a Hebrew verb, *Parash*, by way of the Greek word, *Pharisaios*. Schürer gave currency to the meaning, "one who is separated or separate from." But the history of the discussion shows that this meaning, even if accepted, is not very enlightening. Separated from whom or from what? From uncleanness? From Judas Maccabeus after a legitimate high-priest was named? Separated or expelled from the Sanhedrin by the Sadducees during the time of John Hyrcanus or Alexander Jannaeus? An alternative meaning of the Hebrew verb has been suggested by other scholars, viz. to separate in the sense of distinguish and so to interpret. Hence the Pharisees were "the interpreters, the exegetes". If it be objected that the Hebrew word is not the usual one for "exegetes", perhaps it meant "the precisians".[1] This would give a positive content to the word, not incongruous with ideas later associated with the Pharisees. But neither etymology carries us far.

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 62.

The name Sadducee is equally obscure. That it derives from the proper name, *Zadok*, is now pretty generally agreed ; the older view that it came from the Hebrew adjective, *Zaddik*, i.e. "righteous," seems improbable both grammatically and historically. If from *Zadok*, probably that *Zadok* whom Solomon made high-priest (1 Kings, ii, 35) best answers. Jews who were designated by this name might well have been associated with the priestly aristocracy, and this fits well with our knowledge of the Sadducees but adds nothing to it.

II. *Sources of our Knowledge*

The Old Testament knows nothing of Pharisees or Sadducees. The sources of our knowledge fall into four groups : Josephus in *The Jewish War*, *Jewish Antiquities*, and *The Life* ; the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha ; the New Testament ; and the Rabbinic writings. All four groups must be employed with caution. For Josephus we have to remember that he wrote for Greek and Roman readers near the close of our century, and that he was, accordingly, concerned to discover enlightening parallels between the Jewish sects and the philosophical schools known to his readers. This led him to stress certain traits to the point of distortion, e.g. his emphasis on fatalism as characteristic of the Pharisees in order to compare them with the Stoics. Furthermore, the unfavourable judgments passed on the Pharisees by Josephus occur in passages taken from a non-Jewish source, Nicolaus of Damascus, unfriendly to the Jews and particularly to the Pharisees.

Among the more important sources in the

Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), 1 Maccabees, the Zadokite Fragment, 1 Enoch, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Psalms of Solomon, and 2 Maccabees should be named. We cannot here discuss the involved problems raised by these writings, but it should be pointed out that to classify them as Pharisaic or Sadducean is, in a number of cases, unwarranted. For example, one recent writer has this to say of Sirach: "It probably represents that section of the community which became Sadducean, and on account of the scantiness of genuine Sadducean literature is of great service." Now the absence of any belief in the future life and the praise of the high-priest in Sirach no doubt led to this opinion; but when Sirach was written, *ca.* 200 B.C., party lines had not been drawn, and it is hazardous to use the word Sadducean. Moreover, Sirach is our best source from the early period for the emergence of the Scribe as a professional figure, and for that attitude toward the Law which developed into normative Judaism. If we were forced to use one of the names of subsequent parties, it could be argued that Sirach represents incipient Pharisaism more truly than the Sadducean ideas.[1] The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha must be used with caution and with reference to the dates and purposes of the several writings.

The Gospels are perhaps our best sources for a knowledge of these parties in the first century. Here we have to remember that their testimony is partisan and often polemical, and that they are to be used as defining the issues between Judaism and the early

[1] See Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, for another explanation of Sirach.

Christian movement, and not as giving us an unprejudiced picture of Jewish sects and parties. If we are careful to seek for the philosophy of Judaism in purely Jewish sources, we may use the Christian writings as primary sources for the points of conflict between the two religions.

The Rabbinic sources are indispensable for any just appraisal of Judaism, but since the Sadducees dropped out of the picture before these sources took their final form, they represent the triumph of Pharisaism. In using them we have to remember : first, that they date in their present form from the beginning of the third century of our era, although the nature of the material is such that much of it witnesses to an earlier time ; second, that the Pharisaism of the Rabbinic sources has taken on a definitive form, while in our first century it was still in a state of transition.

III. *The Rise of the Pharisees and the Sadducees*

We have discussed in an earlier chapter the political events forming the background for the rise of Jewish sects and parties. Before the Maccabean revolt, so far as our scanty sources inform us, Judaism presented a united front to the Hellenistic world ; after the successful rebellion, we meet the parties familiar to us in the New Testament. What exactly occasioned the rise of these parties ?

It is commonly assumed that the Pharisees were the successors of the *Hasidim* or Pious, although we have no clear record of their origin. The Sadducees, when they emerge in our sources, were the priestly, aristocratic group. One group of scholars has

characterized the Pharisees as the liberal, progressive party in Judaism, open to new ideas and forward looking in policy, eager to develop the religion along lines that would meet the changing world situation. The Sadducees, on the contrary, they hold to have been the conservatives, clinging to the older views and incapable of adjustment to the new conditions. Another group of scholars emphasizes the non-political character of the Pharisees; they were not a political party and never sanctioned political action as such, since their loyalty was to the Law and not to the state as a political unit. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were politically minded, interested in the independence of a priestly governed state, and willing to subordinate or limit religion in such ways as would permit the dominance of a priestly aristocracy. Recently a third and complementary theory of the origin of these parties has been argued with much force.[1] According to this view the issue was not primarily political or religious, but social and economic, the two parties representing antagonistic social groups. The Pharisees were originally an urban, the Sadducees a rural, group. Wealth was in land, and the Sadducees as landowners clung to the older conditions, the *status quo*. But gradually the situation was reversed. New ideas developed in the towns and cities and were espoused by the Pharisees, who won over the mass of the farmers through their eschatological ideas and their more democratic principles, until by the time of Josephus there were left to the Sadducees only the wealthiest land-owning families who had moved to the cities. Finkelstein shows conclusively that ceremonial

[1] Finkelstein, *op. cit.*

practices were modified to meet the needs of an urban population, and that new ideas, such as the doctrine of resurrection, the development of the oral law, belief in angels and demons, and the emphasis on the individual, naturally arose under urban conditions. He argues that the loss of Jewish independence convinced many that the Pharisees were right and that Jewish destiny was religious rather than nationalist, and hope for the future lay in divine not human action. He thinks this division crops up in Shammai (the rich) and Hillel (the masses), and that the Sadducees were eventually reduced to a few wealthy families whose viewpoint was largely secular.

It is hardly possible or profitable, at this late date, to undertake a precise evaluation of the motives and influences leading to sectarian movements. As Moore points out [1] the recent stress placed upon political or social motives is a reaction from older notions which made the division between Pharisees and Sadducees purely a matter of religious dogmas. Yet this representation "in laying the whole stress on hierarchical and social affiliations . . . runs counter to the unanimous testimony of the sources. Whatever their origin, they were in contemporary eyes a religious party in Judaism, characterized by distinguishing beliefs and negations".

It is more important to grasp the significance of these two sects for the future development of Judaism than to define the exact motives operative at their rise. The present writer believes that all the facts can best be organized around a single issue : whether the whole life of the people could be comprehended and controlled by their religion. The Pharisees by a

[1] *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 70.

thoroughgoing individualizing of Judaism through the development of religious ideas, by democratizing religious institutions, and by subordinating secular to religious concepts affirmed this possibility. The instrument for this development was the Law made applicable to changing conditions by the Tradition, thus ensuring both continuity and development. The Sadducees on the contrary, from whatever motives, did, in effect, deny such a possibility. By rejecting the authority of Tradition, the resurrection and retribution after death, by applying the Law with severity to situations never contemplated in it, and by making themselves a reactionary and aristocratic priestly group, they limited the scope of the religion. The Jews, for good or ill, were a part of the great new Hellenistic world and had perforce to take account of it. The Sadducees made the adjustment by dividing life into the sacred and the secular ; the Pharisees by claiming the individual's entire life for religion and by developing an institution, the synagogue, and an interpretive instrument, the traditional law, took the other alternative, and made possible the distinctive world religion persisting through the centuries as Judaism.

IV. *The Distinctive Teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees*

Our sources indicate that these two movements differed in their doctrines of revelation, eschatology, angelology and demonology, and the relation of Providence to free will. But in no case is the distinction as clear cut as many writers assume. We have to remember that Judaism had its unity not in clearly defined doctrines but in observances prescribed by

Torah. The uncertainty as to the precise doctrinal differences separating the two sects is, accordingly, just what we would expect, and the attempt to define these distinctions exactly is due to the modern student's obsession with dogma.

A. Law and Tradition.

The Maccabean revolt sealed with the blood of martyrs the determination of the Jewish people to remain true to the Law of Moses. He who failed to register his loyalty to the Law in that crisis ceased to be a Jew. Pharisee and Sadducee united in common reverence for the Law and in common acknowledgment of its absolute and mandatory authority as the final and complete revelation of the will of God. But what constituted the Law, "Torah" or only "*the* Torah"? When the definite article was used, the books of Moses were indicated, but "Torah" comprehended the whole content of divine revelation, which, in the view of the Pharisees, meant the Scriptures *plus* the Tradition.

The Sadducees held that Scripture alone was authoritative. But what was Scripture? Following Josephus, subsequent writers have transmitted the view that the Sadducees, like the Samaritans, accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture. But it is only certain that they limited deductions and interpretive renderings to the Books of Moses; the Prophets may have been accepted by them as Scripture, but not as the original font from which tradition could be derived. But did they not reject all tradition? Josephus is our authority for this commonly accepted view: "The Pharisees have delivered to the common people by

tradition from a continuous succession of fathers certain legal regulations which are not written in the Law of Moses, on which account the Sadducean sort rejects them, affirming that what is written is to be regarded as law, but what comes from the tradition of the fathers, is not to be observed."[1] Recent scholars have shown conclusively, however, that Josephus's testimony at this point cannot be accepted as literally accurate.[2] Sadducees also followed tradition in their interpretation of the Law ; indeed, in many instances, the Pentateuchal legislation is so general in character as to require traditional interpretation in order to be carried into effect. The Sadducees no doubt had their own tradition, but they held to the Law as practised in the traditional manner, and opposed the acceptance of Law and Tradition as two sources of Torah, denying the authority of Tradition in its own right. It has been argued by Leszynski[3] that the Pharisees were forced to derive Tradition from the Scriptures by the Sadducean insistence on this principle, and that to this extent they triumphed. In any case it is certain that Sadducean interpretations were much more literal and severe than those of the Pharisees and less applicable to actual conditions.[4] This rigid attitude contributed to the Sadducees' loss of influence with the mass of the people.

The Pharisees counted Scripture and Tradition as constituting the authoritative Torah. We know them in the New Testament as partisans of the

[1] *Antt.*, xvii, 2, 4.
[2] Lightley, *Jewish Sects and Parties in the Time of Christ*, p. 81.
[3] *Die Sadducäer.*
[4] Branscomb, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 32.

unwritten Law.[1] This Tradition they derived from Scripture by "an atomistic exegesis which interprets sentences, clauses, phrases, and even single words, independently of the context or the historical occasion, as divine oracles ; combines them with other similarly detached utterances ; and makes large use of analogy of expression, often by purely verbal associations".[2] A single illustration will suffice to show the absurdities into which this method led them. Simeon ben Yohai proves the resurrection of the dead—a cardinal Pharisaic doctrine and one peculiarly difficult to derive from the Old Testament—from Gen. iii, 19 : "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." "It does not say," he argued, "and to dust thou shalt *go*, but to dust thou shalt *return*," i.e. the living man is dust, that he returns to dust indicates that he will live again ![3] It is easy to score off these exegetical absurdities, but we must remember that the method was consistent with their general viewpoint, and that it was the only means of developing the religion to include new ideas and to meet new conditions, since the concept of development was excluded by definition. Nor is it difficult to understand why the Pharisees valued Tradition above the written Law. In *Pirke Aboth*, a widely read tractate of the Mishnah, the opening saying, ascribed to the men of the Great Assembly, is "Make a fence for the Law". This means, "protect it by surrounding it with cautionary rules to halt a man like a danger signal before he gets within breaking distance of the divine statute itself. . . . When the exigencies of the time seemed to demand it,

[1] Cf. Mark vii, 3, 5, 8, 9, 13 ; Matt. xv, 2, 3, 6 ; Gal. i, 14.
[2] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 248.
[3] Cited by Branscomb, op. cit., p. 32.

the rabbis in council or individually did not hesitate to suspend or set aside laws in the Pentateuch on their own authority, without exegetical subterfuges or pretence of Mosaic tradition Where justification is offered for extraordinary liberties of this kind, Psalm cxix, 126, is frequently quoted, with a peculiar interpretation. Instead of, ' It is time for the Lord to do something, they have made void thy law,' the verse is taken, ' It is time to do something for the Lord ' ".[1] All this confirms the Synoptic saying of Jesus, " Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men " (Mark vii, 8), but it illustrates the consistent method of the Pharisees in attaching to Scripture even their enactments at variance with it

B. Eschatology.

Josephus and the Gospels (Mark xii, 18 and the parallels) agree that Pharisees and Sadducees held divergent views in the field of eschatology. The famous passage in Josephus characterizing the three Jewish philosophies has the following to say on this point : " Every soul, they (the Pharisees) maintain, is imperishable, but the soul of the good alone passes into another body, while the souls of the wicked suffer eternal punishment." And of the Sadducees he writes, " As for the persistence of the soul after death, penalties in the underworld, and rewards, they will have none of them."[2] Here the Sadducees were closer to the Scripture, in which there are few if any passages teaching the doctrine of resurrection ; whether they had moved on from the

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 259.
[2] *Jewish War*, ii, 8, 14.

old Sheol conception, with its picture of passionless shades inhabiting the underworld, in the direction of Greek ideas of immortality, is a disputed point. The Pharisees, on the contrary, taught the resurrection or revivification of the dead, and retribution after death. The rise and development of this Jewish doctrine, no doubt influenced by Persian thought, took its own characteristic line. The formative principle, in distinction from Hellenistic dualism of body and soul, was the unity of the two, necessitating a resurrection of the body as essential to any view of immortality. Jesus and his disciples were in substantial agreement here with the Pharisaic school of thought, as the Gospels show, and this position, the only possible one on the background of Jewish thinking, was of the utmost importance in individualizing the religion. The destiny of the individual and not just of the nation was at stake and depended on deeds done in the body. "Jewish eschatology is the ultimate step in the individualizing of religion, as the Messianic age is the culmination of the national conception".[1]

What then of the Messianic Hope? Is it possible to differentiate Pharisees and Sadducees at this point? Josephus and the New Testament have no answer. It is assumed by many that the Sadducees had no Messianic Hope, and we may safely conclude that the speculations embodied in apocalyptic literature were foreign to them, in so far as these writings go beyond Scripture. But the Messianic Hope in the wider sense, as the coming and manifest rule of God in the whole earth, must have been held by the Sadducees because of its Scriptural basis. That they held to a Messiah from the house of Levi as against the house of

[1] Moore, vol. ii, p. 337.

David, is however no more than a conjecture from their adherence to the Maccabees and their priestly associations. The case of the Pharisees is somewhat different. Rabbinic sources betray disillusionment due to the catastrophes of A.D. 70 and 135 ; the political, nationalistic Hope had proved vain. The apocalypses were heretical writings in the eyes of the Rabbinical writers. It is therefore hazardous to associate the name Pharisee with either type, although Pharisees were swept into both wars, and no doubt shared at the time expectations current in the first century. But the old classification of Sadducees as having no Messianic Hope ; Pharisees as proponents of the apocalyptic Hope ; and Zealots as the advocates of direct political action, is only strictly applicable to the last group. The fact is that there was no single and generally accepted view of the national future, but shifting combinations unified by the conviction that God would eventually vindicate His rule. The Pharisees held that the rule of God, already realized in germ and to the extent that individuals obeyed the Law, was to be made manifest universally by His act. But no one schematization can with confidence be assigned to the Pharisees as a sect ; their central concern was with the Law, and they exhibited the tolerance in matters of doctrine and the intolerance in matters of observance which was to distinguish normative Judaism as a religion. Accordingly, the division of expectations into " This World or Age ", " The Days of the Messiah on this glorified and transformed earth ", and " The World to Come ", which helps us to classify writings dealing with the future, can be little more than a general guide.

In Acts xxiii, 8 we read that the Sadducees " say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit ;

but the Pharisees confess both ". This is the only direct witness to the Sadducean denial of angels and spirits. Since the Old Testament, accepted by them, though more restrained than Judaism at this point, mentions both angels and demons, it has been ingeniously argued that the reference in Acts means, the dead are not raised up, nor are they changed into angels or spirits. Probably the passage is only intended to record the Sadducean protest against the developed angelology and demonology especially evident in apocalyptic literature.

C. *Fate and Free Will.*

Josephus is our only source here. He writes that the Pharisees "attribute everything to Fate (*heimarmene*) and to God; they hold that to act rightly or otherwise rests, indeed, for the most part with men, but that in each action Fate co-operates. . . . The Sadducees . . . do away with Fate altogether, and remove God beyond, not merely the commission, but the very sight of evil. They maintain that man has the free choice of good or evil, and that it rests with each man's will whether he follows the one or the other ".[1] This difference between the two sects does not appear in the New Testament, and there is no evidence from any other source that it constituted an important distinction. Josephus was concerned to explain to his Greek and Roman readers in terms they could understand the differences between the Jewish sects. His description of the Pharisees tallies with the general position of Judaism on this problem, for Judaism held to man's freedom

[1] *Jewish War*, ii, 8, 14.

of choice and to God's providence, without raising the theological and philosophical problems which emerged only at a later time. The idea of fate in the Hellenistic world was often connected with astrological speculations, but the Pharisees were probably not influenced at this point by astralism. They rather followed the main line of Jewish thought in accepting both freedom of choice and divine providence without seeing any necessary contradiction.

V. *The Final Outcome*

The Sadducees because of the rigidity of their position with regard to Torah, because of their secular attitude in the conflict with Rome, and because of their aristocratic temper, were eliminated from Judaism. The Pharisees gradually gained complete control of the religious life of the people. Their final triumph appears in the Mishnah in which the Sadducees are regarded as heretics and Pharisaism is orthodox Judaism.

Chapter Five

PIETISTIC AND REFORMATORY MOVEMENTS

Judaism was not a decadent but a living, vigorous religion in the first century of our era, and we shall, accordingly, expect to find the variety of thought and practice suggested by vitality. Pharisees and Sadducees stand out in our thought for a number of reasons : Pharisaism was to become normative Judaism, and the Sadducees were the chief opponents of the Pharisees ; the Gospels single out the Pharisees because the new faith was defined over against them ; other movements and influences developed largely within rather than in opposition to the general view of Judaism represented by the Pharisees. If we add that the Protestant student's obsession with doctrinal differences makes it difficult for him to understand the varieties of Jewish thought and practice, we shall see why the Pharisees and Sadducees figure almost exclusively in the common Christian thought of Judaism. These two groups yield to a doctrinal classification more readily than other movements, but they by no means represent the complex life of the religion in its entirety. Within Judaism, unified by a community of observance based upon Torah, a large freedom of thought and action was possible, and the sources reveal that such diversity was actual. In this chapter we shall consider certain significant movements which may be roughly classified as pietistic and reformatory.

I. *The Essenes*

Mentioned neither in the New Testament nor in the Talmud the Essenes are known to us mainly from Josephus,[1] Philo, and Pliny the Elder. They have been called "the historical enigma of Judaism", and various romantic or sinister roles, according to the viewpoint of the investigator, have been assigned to them. We do not know the origin or meaning of the name—perhaps from the Aramaic *hasa* or pious ; Philo connected it with the Greek ὅσιος—and the account of their beliefs and practices is far from clear. The Essenes exercised a peculiar fascination upon Josephus. He calls them the third school or sect of the Jews and claims first-hand information about them, "having passed through the three courses" of Essenism himself.[2] In his long account,[3] he stresses their asceticism, involving extreme simplicity of life, community of goods, and celibacy. He gives in detail the manner of life in their settlements, although "they occupy no one city, but settle in large numbers in every town", including the handicrafts practised by them, the meals in their refectories, and their charitable activities. He emphasizes their sobriety and piety. Among their special religious views Josephus mentions prayers to the sun, avoidance of oaths, belief in the corruptibility of the body, which he interprets to mean that they "share the belief of the sons of Greece" in immortality, i.e. as against resurrection. He also records their strict

[1] *The Jewish War*, Bk. ii, 8, 2 ff.

[2] Cf. *Life of Josephus*, 2. Note that this saying is not explicitly identified as of the Essenes.

[3] *Jewish War*, ii, 8, 2–13 ; cf. *Antt.*, xviii, 1, 5.

necessitarianism, "the Essenes exempted nothing from its (fate's) sway," their study of holy books so that some among them were very exact in predictions, and their refusal to offer animal sacrifices in the temple.[1] He knows of another order of Essenes not strictly celibate, but holding that marriage is to be accepted as necessary for the continuance of the race and for that purpose only. When we remember the public Josephus was addressing we can understand his emphasis on the peculiar Essenic beliefs and practices, their asceticism, and perhaps their similarity to mystery cults, and his quite casual reference to their extreme reverence for the "name of their lawgiver (Moses)" and their strict Sabbatarianism.

Certain features in this account must be accepted with caution. When Josephus characterizes the Essenes as like the Greeks, or more definitely as like the Pythagoreans, we have to remember that one of his main objectives was to make Judaism understandable to his Greek readers. His reference to their worship of the sun, "Before the sun is up they utter no word on mundane matters, but offer to him certain prayers, . . . as though entreating him to rise," is difficult to accept at its face value. Certainly he does not cite this practice as evidence of an heretical tendency, which it must have been if his words are to be taken literally. "Can he mean no more than that the Essenes just before sunrise turned eastward and said the regular Jewish prayers like men who implore that the sun may rise?"[2] At any rate, Josephus counts the Essenes as a Jewish sect, noting their zeal for the lawmaker, Moses, and citing this "sun

[1] Cf. *Antt.*, xviii, 1, 5 and Philo, *Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, 12.
[2] Foakes Jackson, *Josephus and the Jews*, p. 76, footnote.

worship " not as an important difference from Jewish practice, but rather as an interesting peculiarity (to show that the Jews were not less sophisticated than the Hellenistic world ?).

The Essenic attitude toward animal sacrifices is equally difficult and perhaps more important as showing their relation to the main currents of Judaism. Both Philo [1] and Josephus [2] record that the Essenes refused to offer animal sacrifices in the temple. The exact meaning of our sources at this point is in question, and scholars find support from them for such widely varying views as that the Essenes were quite outside the pale of Palestinian Judaism, or that they had no objection to sacrifice as such but only wished to practise it in their own way. The latter view seems more probable in view of the fact that both passages are intended to show their zealous piety rather than their heterodoxy. All our sources agree in ascribing to them great reverence for Moses and the Law and extreme piety. The Essenes may have regarded their practices as based upon a special Mosaic tradition preserved by the sect or upon interpretations of the Law peculiar to them.

Josephus's opening sentence, " The Essenes have a reputation for cultivating peculiar sanctity " (or solemnity, *σεμνότητα*), strikes the note sounded by most modern scholars. Klausner writes, " Pharisaism was Hasidism living at large among the people, trying to subjugate politics to religion and adapting religion to life, Essenism was Hasidism isolated, set apart from the world," and he quotes with approval the views of Renan and Schürer that " Essenism is

[1] *Quod Omnis Probus Liber*, 12.
[2] *Antt.*, xviii, 1, 5.

primarily nothing but a more emphatic Pharisaism ".[1] He calls the special emphases of Philo and Josephus a " philosophic veneer with which it was overlaid . . . in their attempts to approximate it to Greek ideas ". Klausner explains their objection to blood sacrifice as due to the influence of the Old Testament prophets and Psalmists, and he finds in this attitude, present in other Jewish circles, the explanation of the ready acceptance of the cessation of sacrifice with the destruction of the second temple. He enlarges also upon the social significance of the movement, " Essenism . . . was the first social Utopia," and reminds us that, however removed from the world, they suffered, on Josephus's testimony, severe persecution in the war with the Romans, thus demonstrating that they continued to be Jewish nationalists.

For the student of Christian origins the problem is not only how Essenism was related to the main stream of Judaism, but whether we can trace any relationship with the rise of the Christian movement. The best answer to the first question probably is that the Essenes represent the extreme pietistic tendency within Judaism, and witness to the richness and variety of the religion in a transition period. Any answer to the second question can only be conjectural. Was John the Baptist an Essene or influenced by Essenism ? His asceticism and association with the " hill country " of Judæa have been urged in support of this view. On the other hand, no peculiar Essenic teaching or practice, aside from the general reference to his asceticism, is assigned to John in the Gospels. If he was influenced by such teachings, the evidence does

[1] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 206 ff.

not warrant us in going beyond a recognition of the fact that such pietistic currents were present and perhaps powerful in the Judaism of his day.

Many have found the silence of the New Testament on the Essenes to be significant, and various romantic attempts have been made to read the whole Christian movement in terms of a development of Essenism. Even Klausner can remark, " We may almost go to the length of saying, with some confidence, that whatever of primitive Christianity is not derivable from Pharisaism may be sought for in Essenism." [1] On the other hand, a recent Christian writer concludes that " when the message of the Gospel became known Essenism disappeared. The greater light absorbed the lesser ".[2] These opposing judgments are equally subjective and carry us quite beyond our evidence. There is neither any actual evidence that Christianity was derived directly from Essenism, nor that Essenism disappeared because of the rise of Christianity. The Essenes were a small group, Philo suggests the number four thousand, and the silence of the New Testament is not much more significant than the silence of the Talmud. The early Christians clashed with Judaism in its most aggressive representatives, the Pharisees, and from what we know of the Essenes their attitude to the new movement would not be essentially different from that of the Pharisees.

One other point about the Essenes has intrigued modern scholars, their possession of certain esoteric books. What were these books ? " The esoteric books may have been of an historical nature, or like the

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 211, 212.
[2] Bindley, *Religious Thought in Palestine in the Time of Christ.*

Zadokite fragment have contained a record of some of their traditional rulings, or have resembled, as often suggested, our apocalyptic books".[1] Others have supposed them to contain a developed angelology and demonology.

We are on safe ground only when we regard the Essenes as symptomatic of the pietistic tendencies within Judaism. Nor should they be regarded as the sole, even if the most important, representatives of this "higher-life" or "holiness" tendency in the religion. We know from the Talmud that a number of such movements, and they must have had their roots in our period, were significant enough to acquire special names. The *Zenu'im* or Chaste Ones, the *Kesherim* or Blameless Ones, the *Watikim* or Men of Firm Principles, the *Banna'im* or Builders *et al.* appear in this later source. Philo speaks of the *Therapeutæ* and Josephus knows of other similar pietistic groups.[2] The existence of such groups within Judaism helps us to understand the flexibility and breadth of the religion. We are too apt to regard Judaism as fixed and static and, accordingly, to think of the rise of Christianity in unreal terms.

II. *The Zadokite Sect of Damascus*

In 1910 Solomon Schechter published a document discovered by him in Cairo describing an otherwise unknown Jewish sect.[3] The document, written in Hebrew, is the sect's own account of its origin,

[1] Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 63, note.

[2] Branscomb, *op. cit.*, pp. 56, 57.

[3] Schechter, *Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, vol. i; see also R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. ii, p. 785 ff.

history, and tenets. It was called by Schechter "Fragments of a Zadokite Work" because the sectarians professed to be the sons of Zadok. Other scholars characterize the writing as Sadducean. Owing to the figurative language the document is not as illuminating to us as to its original readers, but some points are reasonably clear. Some time before the beginning of the Christian era these sectaries migrated from Jerusalem to Damascus, because of their dissatisfaction with the religious conditions in Jerusalem, and in order that they might carry out their own ideas and practices in peace. This migration, and the bitter language used in controverting their opponents in certain matters of interpretation of the Law, show that they were in conflict with the leaders of the religion and constituted, to some extent at least, a seceding sect. Moore, however, points out that their differences from the Talmud are not greater than existed between great legal lights in the first and second centuries. "In general the covenanters are stricter than the later rabbis. . . . Their affinities are throughout with the Pharisees, not with any other variety of Judaism".[1] It is to be noted that their loyalty to the Law of Moses was more, not less, intense than that of the Pharisees, and that they claimed for their interpretations the direct authority of the Law. Their secession then was in the nature of a reformation of the religion based upon the same general viewpoint as that of normative Judaism. Their peculiar views are probably not to be over-emphasized but to be appraised in the light of the tolerance of the religion in the realm of beliefs.

[1] Moore, vol. i, p. 201.

A considerable literature has been produced, dealing with this sect. Our source speaks of "The Teacher of Righteousness", "The Star," or the "Lawgiver", who mediated a "New Covenant" (accordingly, the sect is often designated as Covenanters), and who was to come "in the end of days". The coming one is not of the house of David but "from Aaron and Israel."[1] Their eschatology is far from clear and serves to illustrate the fluid state of current expectations rather than to prove an heretical scheme. The special emphasis of the sect upon ethical obligations, upon the necessity of repentance and God's readiness to forgive, and the fact that the Prophets are quoted in our fragment even more frequently than is the Law[2] are suggestive, but can hardly be pressed to indicate that the sect or members of it were close to the Christian position. These very notes were being sounded by the Pharisees and were to become characteristic of normative Judaism.

The severity of their interpretations is especially apparent in regulations about marriage. While polygamy was legitimate under the Law of Moses and the rabbinical interpretations of it, the New Testament as well as the later Jewish literature assumes a society moving toward monogamy. Economic and social conditions in Palestine militated against polygamy. This sect was in the vanguard of this tendency, the Zadokite fragment expressly prohibiting a man from taking a second wife while the first lived, and also prohibiting the marriage of a man with his niece. R. H. Charles holds that divorce was

[1] Cf. *Jubilees*, xxxi, 12 ff., and *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Judah*, xxv).

[2] R. H. Charles, *op. cit.*, Law, ten times, Prophets, eleven times.

"absolutely forbidden" by them, but Ginsberg[1] and Moore[2] deny that the evidence supports this absolute prohibition of divorce. They were also strict Sabbatarians, adhering to the "Sabbath day's journey".

It was only natural that the discovery of the Zadokite fragment should inspire romantic speculations about the sect and in particular its possible relations with the Christian movement. Charles thinks that their appreciation of the Prophets (which he terms unparalleled in legalistic Judaism), their insistence on repentance, their constant proclamation of God's readiness to forgive the repentant, their expectation of a Messiah just at this period, all prepared them to accept Christianity. Did they form, he asks, a part of the "great company of the priests that were obedient to the faith" (Acts vi, 7)? G. Margoliouth writes of them as "The Sadducean Christians of Damascus".[3] This is an interesting, but not wholly convincing, suggestion. We have to remember, first, that our fortuitous knowledge of this sect does not prove its importance, and that its disappearance probably calls for no more special explanation than does the disappearance of other such sects; and, second, that in fundamental outlook, i.e. religion based firmly on Torah, the covenanters were at one with the Pharisees. That their ethical emphasis and Messianic hope may have prepared them for an acceptance of Christianity can scarcely be denied, but it ought not to be unduly pressed. Any actual relationship with the Christian movement must remain a matter of conjecture, and their

[1] *Eine unbekannte jüdische Sekte*, p. 26.
[2] Vol. ii, p. 124, note.
[3] *Expositor*, 1911, pp. 449 ff.; 1912, pp. 213 ff.

significance for our study consists in the fact that they witness to reform tendencies in the Judaism contemporary with the rise of the new religion.

III. *John the Baptist and his Disciples*

We are accustomed to reckon John the Baptist as belonging to Christianity rather than to Judaism. This is the testimony, in the main, of the Gospels and the Acts. To be sure, for the Christian writers, he is the link between the two religions, less than the least in the Kingdom but more and other than a mere Jewish leader, the Herald and Forerunner of the New Order. His subordination to Jesus, particularly stressed in John's Gospel, is not intended to reduce the Baptist to the level of contemporary Judaism, but rather to magnify the importance of the Greater than he to whom he witnessed.

Without questioning here the importance of John for the rise of Christianity, we may well study him as an independent figure, the leader of a reform movement within Judaism and significant for that religion as such. There is ample justification for this type of study in the testimony of Josephus and indeed in the New Testament. Josephus's account of John's work[1] is not entirely clear. While it can be hardly a Christian interpolation, since it omits the distinctive Christian emphasis upon the Messianic teaching of John, it may be intended to controvert the Christian view. Josephus agrees with the Gospels that John was a good man, that he practised baptism, and that he was first imprisoned and later put to death

[1] *Antt.*, xviii, 5, 2

by Herod Antipas. But he differs from the Gospels in the interpretation of these facts. John's baptism, according to Josephus, was a rite of purification, a symbol of inward righteousness and not expiatory of "some sins". The account suggests that baptism was at first administered to those who were already practising virtue, but later "when others came in crowds about him" (to be baptized ?) Herod became suspicious and imprisoned John and afterwards put him to death, fearing political consequences and wishing to anticipate a rebellion. As has often been pointed out, Josephus here gives no adequate explanation of Herod's acts. The Gospels account for them in a twofold way : the Messianic significance of John's preaching (implied) and John's rebuke of Herod (explicit).[1] But from whatever motive, Josephus describes John's work as wholly within the limits of Judaism. It should be noted that the Slavonic Josephus includes both the Messianic note in John's preaching and John's rebuke of Herod for marrying Herodias. The precise significance of Slavonic Josephus is uncertain.[2]

The Gospel record of the relations between John and Jesus cannot be disposed of as a Christian invention. Why the sinless Jesus submitted to a baptism of repentance was a problem for the evangelists which would hardly have been invented by them. We may assume then that the two movements bore a definite relationship to each other. But "Christian tradition exhibits . . . a progressive magnification of everything

[1] Cf. Mark i, 1–8, and the parallels, Mark vi, 14–29 and parallels.

[2] Cf. Thackeray's *Slavonic Additions in Appendix to Josephus*, iii, pp. 644–8, Loeb Classical Library; J. W. Jack, *The Historic Christ*, London, James Clarke, 1933; G. H. C. Macgregor, in *Expository Times*, May, 1935, pp. 355 ff.

which could set John forth in the subordinate relation of herald and forerunner of the gospel, with progressive minimizing of all that might allow to his reformatory movement independent value ".[1] The earliest New Testament references assign to John nothing transcending contemporary Judaism. His strong eschatology, his ascetic practice, his prophetic emphasis, and even his protest against a self-sufficient nationalism (Matt. iii, 9 and Luke iii, 8) indicate no more than a reform movement in the character of the prophets. To be sure, both Mark and "Q" interpret his Messianic pronouncements as pointing to Jesus, his baptism as a baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and Luke adds that he "preached the gospel" (iii, 18). But all this may be explained as due to the light thrown back upon John's ministry by subsequent history. The Fourth Gospel takes a further step in annexing John's reformatory ministry to the Christian movement by minimizing the content of his message, which is considered as having nothing to do with remission of sins, since Jesus is acknowledged by John as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world", and by magnifying the rôle of the Coming One whose baptism was a sign to John rather than an experience for Jesus (i, 26 ff.).

In addition to this perfectly natural tendency in the Gospels, and perhaps partially explanatory of it, we have a few scattered references to the existence of a John the Baptist movement or sect persisting after the rise of Christianity. There are two references in our earliest sources to the disciples of John, as more ascetic than Jesus's followers (Mark ii, 18 ff; cf. Matt. xi, 18 ff.) and as messengers from John to Jesus

[1] Bacon, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xlviii, p. 45.

(Matt. xi, 2; cf. Luke vii, 18 ff.). Acts witnesses to the existence at Ephesus of "certain disciples" who knew only "the baptism of John" (Acts xviii, 25; xix, 3, 4). The Fourth Gospel "pointedly emphasizes his subordination to Jesus (i, 6; xix, 34; iii, 13; iv, 1) and it may well be that he wishes to counteract a contemporary Jewish movement which sought to buttress its opposition to the spread of Christianity by exalting the Baptist at the expense of Christ".[1] Interesting attempts have also been made to substantiate the claims of the later Mandaean sect and other movements as deriving from John the Baptist.[2]

Whatever John's relation to the Christian movement and to other persisting sects may have been, it is clear that he is a witness to Judaism in the first century. Out of Judaism could and did come this striking reformer who shows "a moral discontent with the ceremonial system to which his youth would have otherwise been dedicated. He becomes not a priest but a prophet. . . . He attempts to institute by repentance and baptism a new people of God, as independent of race as though God should raise up from the wilderness stones a seed of Abraham according to his spirit. It is a new departure, but only as bringing to life again the message of the ancient prophets".[3]

The message and work of John the Baptist and the response of the Jewish people to it is, accordingly, significant as showing the vitality and many-sided character of contemporary Judaism.

[1] Macgregor, *Gospel of John*, Introd., p. xxx.
[2] See below, Part II, Chapter 7, pp. 321 ff.
[3] Bacon, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42.

CHAPTER SIX

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES: THE ZEALOTS AND THE "PEOPLE OF THE LAND"

In addition to the major sects and parties and the pietistic and reformatory movements we have to note certain other aspects of Judaism best defined in relation to the political and social conditions in the first century. These groupings do not yield to classification by religious beliefs, for they conformed to the Pharisaic view of religion, at least in the main, their variations from Pharisaism being due to other causes. They do not figure under party names in the New Testament—an added reason for believing that they conformed to recognized Jewish tenets—but they are of importance for an understanding of the Christian writings. We shall consider two such groupings, the Zealots and the "People of the Land".

I. *The Zealots*

The name Zealot comes to us from the Greek *Zelotes* which derives in turn from Hebrew and Aramaic words meaning "the zealous". The Hebrew-Aramaic word accounts for the epithet "the Cananæan" in Mark iii, 18; Matthew x, 4. In Luke vi, 15; Acts i, 13 the Greek word *Zelotes* is used, and it is probable that "Cananæan" is a transliteration into Greek of the Semitic word, and that it is not intended to mean "a man from (an unknown) Kanan". In the Old Testament this word is used in

the sense of "zeal" in general, and it is not always clear even in our later sources when it refers to a specific party or movement, and when it bears this more general meaning.

Dissatisfaction with political conditions characterized all the Jews, with the possible exception of the Sadducees, from the time of Herod on. But this unrest took various forms. The Pharisees, in the main, were opposed to political action not because of pro-Roman sympathies but because of their view of the nature of Judaism. They were swept into the war against Rome (A.D. 66–70) in spite of this principle. Bevan reminds us that "the thing regularly charged against the Jews by Gentile anti-Semitic writers is not financial cunning but fierce turbulence. They were a people terrible to control. . . . Those were no people of bowed backs, no money lenders and dealers in old clothes, who made the Græco-Roman world to tremble in the years before 70, so that the ultimate victory over them seemed the deliverance from a great peril, one of the great actions in the history of Rome."[1] And Klausner paints an appalling picture of "wars, rebellions, outbreaks and riots, and all of them with their concomitant of incessant bloodshed".[2] He thinks that "scarcely a year went by during this century (i.e. before the war with Rome) without wars or other disturbances". He reckons that not less than two hundred thousand men fell.

It is by no means easy for a modern to reconcile such statements with the picture of Judaism already sketched: controversies between Pharisees and Sadducees, scribal disputes about interpretations of

[1] *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, Gore *et al.*, pt. ii, p. 21.
[2] *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 167.

Torah, pietistic and reformatory movements. We have to remember that warfare did not absorb the attention of a whole people as in modern times, and that revolutionary activities and guerrilla skirmishes could be contemporary with a relatively ordered life on account of the simplicity of social and economic structure. We have also to remember that both the New Testament and the Rabbinic writings took their present form after the rebellion had issued in the tragedy of the year 70. The active revolutionaries may have been relatively few in number, however numerous the body of sympathizers behind them.

Josephus is again our main source for the origin and history of the revolutionary movement culminating in the Jewish war against Rome. In using Josephus we must remember that he was violently opposed to this movement, calling its active protagonists " robbers ", while others no doubt reckoned them " patriots ". Moreover his use of terms makes it difficult to distinguish between the antecedents of the movement and the rise of a definite party called Zealots. From the time of the Maccabees there had been extreme nationalists among the Jews, and political unrest continued under Herod in spite of or because of his strong rule. Josephus tells of a brigand-chief named Ezekias who ravaged " the district on the Syrian border. He (Herod) caught him and put him and many of the brigands to death. This welcome achievement was immensely admired by the Syrians ".[1] But there must have been Jews who did not " immensely admire " Herod's action, and no doubt their name for Ezekias was not " brigand " but " patriot ". Josephus does not use the word Zealot of this band. Other sporadic

[1] *Jewish War*, i, 10, 5; *Antt.*, xiv, 9, 2.

uprisings are mentioned including an account of conspirators against Herod who carried concealed daggers (forerunners of the later *Sicarii* ?), but again the word Zealot does not appear.[1]

When Judæa and Samaria passed directly under Rome, with the deposition of Archelaus (A.D. 6), a more serious rebellion flared up. The occasion was the census ordered for purposes of taxation by Quirinius, governor of Syria, to be carried out by Coponius (A.D. 6-9) the first procurator. The Jews regarded the census not only as a mark of political servitude but also as directed against the theocratic principle. Again, as in Maccabean times, political and religious motives coalesced. The Jews of Judæa were persuaded by the high-priest to submit, but in Galilee one Judas (the Galilean or Gaulonite) joined forces with Sadduk, a Pharisee, in organized resistance. Josephus deplores this rebellion, ascribing ulterior motives to its leaders, " hopes of gain to themselves," and sees only the most disastrous consequences for the nation.[2] But he reckons Judas as the founder of the fourth sect or philosophy among the Jews, and characterizes this sect in the following terms : " While they agree in all other respects with the Pharisees, they have an invincible passion for liberty and take God for their only leader and Lord."[3] In the *Jewish War*, ii, 8, 1 appears a curious statement to the effect that " this man was a sophist who founded a sect of his own, having nothing in common with the others ". This can only be regarded as an exaggeration due to Josephus's desire to dissociate the revolutionary

[1] *Antt.*, xv, 8, 3 ff.
[2] xviii, 1, 1 ; *Jewish War*, ii, 8, 1.
[3] *Antt.*, xviii, 1, 6.

movement from Judaism. Here again the name Zealot does not occur, although most scholars date the rise of the party from the events of A.D. 6–7. The more organized form of the rebellion and the fact that Josephus calls Judas the founder of the fourth sect of Jewish philosophy point in this direction, even if, for reasons of his own, Josephus prefers to call them robbers or brigands. Only Acts v, 37 informs us of the failure of Judas's rebellion.

The procurators seem, for a time, to have been fairly successful in adapting Roman rule to Jewish conditions, aided no doubt by the reluctance of the Pharisees to sanction direct political action.[1] But if the fire smouldered it did not go out. The procurators were dealing with a situation unparalleled in Roman colonial experience. The intense and narrow religious nationalism of the Jews caused them to misunderstand Rome and to give a sinister interpretation to actions innocent in themselves. On the other hand, although Rome made unusual concessions to the Jews, " Roman practice did not always harmonize with Roman theory."[2] Individual procurators were both arrogant and ignorant of their subjects. The rule of Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 40–44) was, to be sure, a period of comparative peace and prosperity, but it only served to intensify the resentment of the Jews at the return of the procurators after Agrippa's death. We cannot here recount the events leading up to the Jewish war, but clashes with the Roman authorities grew more frequent and bloody, and culminated in the final catastrophe.

Josephus does not actually use the word Zealots of

[1] Note Gamaliel's tone of depreciation in Acts v, 37 ff.
[2] Angus, *E.R.E.*, article " Zealots ", p. 850.

the extreme nationalists until the Jewish war.[1] He first mentions the *Sicarii* (Assassins) by that name during the procuratorship of Felix (A.D. 52–60).[2] This word comes from the Latin *sica*, a curved dagger. The Sicarii were probably the extremists within or, as some prefer, alongside the Zealot movement. They held out even after the destruction of Jerusalem, their last stronghold, Masada, falling in A.D. 73.

Our special concern is with the Zealot movement during the first half of the century, covering the lifetime of Jesus and the rise of the primitive church on Palestinian soil. Early in this century the movement took on something like party form, probably in Galilee. There is no evidence that adherents to this party held peculiar religious views. They were extreme and active Pharisees, so far as their religious views went, who were " minded to hasten the end ". No doubt the movement included many who were merely adventurers or worse, but in the light of Jewish history only a religious motive can be held to account for their fanatical courage. Klausner thinks the Zealots were the finest patriots of their time.

The Gospels contain only obscure and scattered possible references to the Zealots. One of Jesus's disciples was Simon " the Zealot " or " the zealous one ".[3] The difficult verse, " And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and men of violence take it by force " (Matt. xi, 12), is often interpreted as referring to these

[1] *War*, iv, 3, 9. [2] *War*, ii, 13, 3.

[3] Klausner thinks Simon was a Zealot and that the epithet used in Matt. x, 4; Mark iii, 18 is due to a later time when it was difficult to understand why a Zealot was among his disciples (*Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 206).

revolutionists. Did they play an important rôle in the condemnation and death of Jesus? It has been suggested that "it was the plots and violence of the Zealots which aggravated Pilate's apprehensions upon which the Jewish authorities played".[1] Was Barabbas a Zealot (cf. Mark xv, 7 ff. and the parallels)? The Fourth Gospel terms him a "robber", using the term most frequently employed by Josephus of the revolutionists (λῃστής, John xviii, 40). These and other passages in the Gospels have been cited as showing the relation of Zealotism to the beginnings of Christianity (e.g. Luke xiii, 1).

It is clear that Jesus and the early Christian community did not share the views of the Zealots, nor do the Gospels represent Jesus as in major conflict with them, his controversy being with the accepted leaders of Judaism, the Pharisees. Yet, it is urged, Jesus grew up in Galilee, the hotbed of the revolutionists, and must have constantly faced these intense and radical patriots and their ideas, if he did not actually feel the attraction of their movement. Moreover his teachings against violence, e.g. in the Sermon on the Mount, take on fresh vividness and meaning if we think of them, not as vague and abstract, but as spoken to a definite and crucial situation in which violent action was an issue. If we add that our records of his life and teaching come for the most part out of the period after A.D. 70, when the Zealot movement had resulted in the destruction of the Jewish state, and that they may, accordingly, betray a conscious or unconscious suppression of the political aspects of his mission, we can appreciate the force of the suggestion that this movement constituted a very

[1] Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 851.

considerable factor in the background of Christian beginnings. A recent writer has drawn up an account of Jesus's life and teaching as viewed by a nationalist such as he assumes Simon the Zealot to have been.[1] This is an attractive reading of the evidence, but to record Zealotism as a major issue confronting Jesus goes beyond our evidence. We know that the Zealots were active and influential during Jesus's lifetime ; that he and his disciples did not share their political principles ; and that Jesus's conception of the Kingdom of God excluded these principles. How influential the Zealot movement was in the definition of his position and whether Zealotism gave rise to a struggle in his own life must remain a matter of conjecture.

II. "*The People of the Land*" or *Ammê-ha-Areṣ*

Lines of cleavage appear in Judaism not only with respect to the political situation but also with reference to social and cultural conditions. The most important groupings here are those of " The People of the Land " over against " The Associates " or *Haberim*. It is customary to refer to the former by the Hebrew term *Ammê-ha-Areṣ* because the English translation " People of the Land " is somewhat misleading This epithet is only clearly defined in the Rabbinic writings, and it is best to characterize this stratum of the Jewish people from these writings, and then to raise the question as to the accuracy of this definition for the first century.

Am-ha-Areṣ is properly a collective meaning the

[1] Hoyland, *Simon the Zealot*.

common people, but it is oftener used of an individual, a man of the common people, and the plural, *Ammê-ha-Areç*, means something like our expression "the masses". It is used in Ezra and Nehemiah to designate the half-pagan native population of Judæa. Later it was applied solely to Jews, but the derogatory connotation persisted. The term is not to be understood as referring to the people of the soil, agricultural labourers, although the majority of this class may have been reckoned as *Ammê-ha-Areç*, or to the proletariat in general. Nor does it mean the poor as over against the rich, for prosperous publicans are regularly termed *Ammê-ha-Areç*. The distinction between rich and poor is not wanting in Judaism, but when our term became fixed the disparity was perhaps less marked than in some other periods. The wars with Rome had reduced the numbers of wealthy Jews in Palestine, and the Rabbinic sources contain only scattered references to class distinctions on purely economic grounds. Nor is the term ever used in these writings as of the humble pious folk over against the arrogant wicked.

To understand its use we must briefly summarize the situation. The triumph of the Pharisees meant that their interpretation of Judaism became the generally accepted position. The Sadducees dropped out of the picture with the Jewish war against Rome, and thereafter figure as heretics; Essenes, Zealots, and the like did not challenge this fundamental position, but developed it along ascetic, pietistic, or political lines. The mass of the people remained loyal to religion as revealed in Torah, following the Pharisees, even if many followed from afar. They did not deny the validity of Torah, neither did they

observe the Tradition with meticulous care. The negligence of some was no doubt deliberate ; others, perhaps most, were simply ignorant of the refinements of Pharisaism, having neither the time nor the inclination to submit to the intellectual and moral discipline essential to a mastery of these observances. Quite naturally the more zealous adherents of Pharisaism banded together as Associates, *Haberim*, who were pledged to carry out certain traditions. These voluntary associations were intended both to preserve and to propagate Pharisaic practices. The *Haberim* were distinguished by their scrupulousness along two main lines, the payment of the priest's portion and the tithes from all foods, and the observance of the complicated rules dealing with cleanness and uncleanness. The social consequences of their position were far-reaching, for an Associate might not carry on ordinary social intercourse with the *Ammê-ha-Areç* without fear of defilement.[1]

That bitterness should result from such distinction was inevitable, on the one hand intellectual and religious snobbery, and on the other resentment and class consciousness. The language used by each group of the other, but best known to us in the case of the *Haberim*, was often violent.[2] Perhaps the extravagant language of religious controversy is not to be taken more seriously here than elsewhere, and Abrahams argues that most of the demands of the *Haberim* were only in the direction of such social amenities as are to-day everywhere accepted.[3]

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. ii, p. 159 f.

[2] Cf. Cohen, "The Place of Jesus in the Religious Life of His Day," *Journal of Bib. Lit.*, xlviii, 1929, p. 103.

[3] Excursus on the *Am-ha-Arec* in Montefiore's *The Synoptic Gospels*, vol. ii, p. 647 ff.

But we know from the history of religion that all such "higher life" or "holiness" movements are peculiarly liable to spiritual pride. In this case the nature of the controversy was such as to result in the cleavage of society along very ugly lines, for the Associates were pledged to avoid the *Ammê-ha-Areç* in every way possible and to practise social exclusiveness from the highest possible motive, loyalty to religion. That this unfortunate combination is not unknown in other faiths does not minimize the danger. It ought to be added in fairness that any one could become an Associate by conforming to the necessary requirements, but some of the rabbis would not recognize piety in anyone who had not received personal instruction from an accredited scholar.

Thus we see that this cleavage in Judaism, while having its roots in religion, bore social fruits. Perhaps the commonest characterization of the *Ammê-ha-Areç* in the Rabbinic writings is that they were ignorant, uneducated. Since formal education among the Jews consisted mainly in the study of Torah, this description amounts to irreligious. Indeed Hillel could say: "No ignorant man (*Am-ha-Areç*) is religious." [1]

Does this represent the situation in Jesus's day? The Gospels nowhere use the exact terms of the Rabbinic writings. Perhaps this is because Jesus and his disciples were themselves *Ammê-ha-Areç*. More probably it is because the term was not yet sharply defined, as it came later to be with the rise of the *Haberim*, although it was in use. In Jesus's day some of the practices of the Pharisees, e.g. the rule of

[1] *Pirke Aboth*, 2, 5. Abrahams (*op. cit.*, p. 651) thinks this means the "man devoted exclusively to worldly pursuits".

handwashing before meals and similar purificatory rites, may have been regarded as innovations in the nature of the extension of priestly requirements to the laity generally, and may not have commanded such general acceptance as was later accorded them.[1]

Jesus and his disciples were *Ammê-ha-Areç*, for the Gospels consistently represent Jesus as associating with sinners and publicans, as eating with such persons, as justifying his disciples in their failure to observe the Pharisaic handwashing, and as defining his mission in terms of the poor, needy, unfortunate, without regard to meticulous observance of tradition (Matt. v, 17–20 and other references in Matthew, perhaps from a special source used by the evangelist, alone suggest a different attitude). Luke, to be sure, is especially emphatic on this point.

But to term the *Ammê-ha-Areç* as the humble, pious Jews, who responded to the message and mission of Jesus, is justified neither by the rabbinic evidence nor by the Gospels. This assumption, frequently made in books dealing with the teaching of Jesus, particularly in comments on the first beatitude, is the result of reading into this group as a whole what came out of it in individual cases. No doubt they were receptive, from the very nature of the situation, to the teaching of Jesus, as was no other stratum of Jewish society, but it would be as uncritical to characterize all of them as devout and pious folk as to use the same description of all the unchurched to-day.

[1] Cf. Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 156 ff. on Mark vii, 1–23.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE HEREAFTER IN JEWISH THOUGHT

Jewish expectations and beliefs about the future are important for an understanding both of Judaism and of Christianity, but no aspect of the religion is more complicated. Except for the belief in resurrection Judaism had no single, stereotyped doctrine of the Hereafter, and the student must resist the temptation to demand uniformity of outlook. The common element in all forms of expectation was the faith that God would eventually make His Rule manifest, and that this would mean for His people a Good Time or Golden Age, with freedom to live their own life and follow their own religion, unhindered by foreign domination, and enjoying the favour of God. How and by what means this Good Time would come were questions variously answered in Judaism. Later Judaism developed the universal and cosmic significance of God's Rule, and by the doctrine of resurrection emphasized the place of the individual in the Hereafter. But the national was combined with the individual Hope, not superseded by it. Christians focused these expectations about the single figure of Jesus, the Messiah, thus defining and organizing various features of Jewish thought. Although firmly established by usage, the terms Messiah and Messianic are not happy designations of the wide range of Jewish expectations. The student must ask, in each case, whether the terms refer to Christian usage, to the

narrower Jewish usage (i.e. "any instrument used by God, and especially the king of Judah or Israel, might be called God's anointed one or Christ"), or to the wider Jewish hopes, which often had no place for a special agent, God Himself being the direct Mover and Guarantor of the future. We shall indicate the main strands of thought in Judaism about the Hereafter, and then discuss the special form of expectation known as apocalyptic.

I. *The Hereafter in Jewish Thought*

The prophets predicted the coming of God's manifest Rule in various forms and with varied imagery. In earlier times this expectation was cast in national terms: the "Day of Jahweh" would mean the overthrow of Israel's enemies; the establishment of a glorious kingdom ruled over by a king of David's line; "the ingathering of the scattered members of the race in their own land, and the conversion of the Gentiles."[1] The prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries made their chief contribution to this Hope by introducing a sternly ethical note. Amos, for example (v, 18–20), declared that the Day of Jahweh would be a day of judgment upon Israel for her sins. This ethical emphasis prepared the way for a wider and deeper form of expectation.

In New Testament times we find new and radically different forms of expectation in Judaism. In the main, the Hope had become more nearly universal and cosmological in scope and more individualistic in emphasis, although the national features were not

[1] *Hebrew Religion* Oesterley and Robinson p. 343.

superseded. The whole world, not just Israel, is to be involved in the changes anticipated ; there is to be an annihilation of the whole world, not just of Israel's enemies, that the new order may be established on a universal scale. Speculations about the division of time into world-epochs, this age and the age to come, are rife and, most significant of all, a resurrection of the dead becomes an organizing doctrine. Scholars are still occupied with the task of seeking the roots and tracing the developments of these new elements in the Jewish Hope. Persian eschatology, with its marked dualism and its schematization of the future into World-epochs, Judgment, Destruction of the world by fire, and Resurrection of the Dead, no doubt influenced more or less profoundly the shaping of Jewish thought. In a general way we may say that the inner development of Judaism made Persian eschatology congenial to many Jewish thinkers.

The most striking difference between the earlier and the later Hope is the development of the belief in resurrection. In the religion of Israel attention was centred upon the national future, and this emphasis inhibited interest in the destiny of the individual after death. The tomb or Sheol was the abode of the dead, who were " conscious wraiths " of the men that had been. Perhaps only two passages in the Old Testament (Isaiah xxvi, 17–19 and Daniel xii, 1 ff.) are to be interpreted as witnessing to faith in individual immortality, and Moore thinks both betray an interest in " the renascence of the people " rather than a return to life of individuals.[1] How the dominant belief in a purely national future gave way to a doctrine of individual resurrection and retribution our sources

[1] *Judaism*, vol. ii, pp. 295–7.

do not reveal in any detail. The Book of Job suggests that the problem of reconciling faith in a just and sovereign God with misfortunes that do not arise from sin led to the repudiation of the prophetic doctrine, and the acceptance of some form of belief in immortality. Extraneous influences, notably the Persian, probably played a rôle in this development. At any rate we know that resurrection and retribution after death were cardinal tenets of Pharisaism and became accepted dogmas in normative Judaism. Certain aspects of this new belief must be considered.

Jewish thought developed from other premises than the Greek, and hence issued in a different form of faith. "To the Greek, man was essentially a spirit temporarily imprisoned in a body, and it was natural that when the body decayed, the liberated soul should still continue to exist and to pursue its course. The Hebrew, on the other hand, thought of man as a body animated by a spirit, and when he developed a doctrine of immortality, it naturally took the form of a resurrection of the body, reanimated by the same or by another spirit."[1] Or, to quote Moore, "The premises were totally different; on the one side the dualism of soul and body, on the other the unity of man, soul and body. To the one the final liberation of the soul from the body, its prison house or sepulchre, was the very meaning and worth of immortality; to the other the reunion of soul and body to live again in the completeness of man's nature."[2]

A resurrection or revivification of the body thus became the unique form of the Jewish doctrine of immortality, arising from and combining with the

[1] *Hebrew Religion*, Oesterley and Robinson, p. 328.
[2] *Judaism*, vol. ii, p. 295.

earlier national Hope. The influence of the earlier type is everywhere apparent. For example, Enoch 85–90 contemplates only the revivification of the righteous dead to share in the national triumph; and the Golden Age, whether confined to the "Days of the Messiah" or including the "Age to Come", allowed room for the Rule of God to be enjoyed by His people on this earth, thus showing that the ancient doctrine of retribution in this life was not so much repudiated as complemented by the new faith in individual resurrection. Although we may deplore the more materialistic notes in Jewish expectations, e.g. the Messianic Banquet (cf. Luke xiv, 15; Matt. viii, 11; Luke xxii, 29; Matt. xxvi, 29; Rev. ii, 17), we can understand how such figures arose naturally and logically from the sturdy realism of Hebrew thinking.

When we distinguish between the earlier and later forms of Jewish expectation, we do so in the interest of clarity, and not because the Jews themselves recognized any such development. The Rabbinic writers undertook to show that the doctrine of resurrection was scriptural.[1] However, for the sake of orderliness, we may think of two main types of Hope: the national form, a golden age for the people of God upon this earth; and the eschatological form, the final catastrophe of the world as it is and the coming in its place of a new world or age. Both were viewed as effected by God's acts and as fulfilling His plan, but the latter form was more obviously supernatural in character.

The national form was an inheritance from the great prophets and beyond, for the prophets did not

[1] Cf. Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 32.

invent this Hope ; they rather stressed the necessity of a moral reformation within Israel than the liberation and prosperity of the nation. How would the Good Time come ? The usual answer was given in symbols taken from the glorious days of the early monarchy ; a Prince of the line of David, an Offshoot or Scion of David, even David himself would be the Anointed, who would serve as God's instrument in carrying out His purposes. But this was only one symbol, even if the most common. In the Maccabean period, when the ruling house belonged to the tribe of Levi, a king of this tribe was to be the Anointed One. Large areas of prophecy make no room for King or Monarchy as such ; God Himself will be King. This type of the Hope we term the theocratic as opposed to the more narrowly political. A good example of the theocratic form, without mention of any monarch or Anointed person, is found in Enoch x, 17—xi, 2, while an example of the religious hope of the sovereignty of God combined with the restoration of the monarchy in the person of a son of David is the seventeenth Psalm of Solomon.[1] A distinguishing characteristic of the purely national hope was the absence of any hint of the resurrection or the Age to Come. Nor was the duration of this Good Time defined ; possibly it was conceived as everlasting in duration.

The eschatological form was characterized by belief in a resurrection, universal in scope or of the righteous dead, and by belief in the Age to Come as distinct from the Good Time on this earth. In contrast to Persian thought, the Jews did not dwell exclusively upon this New Age, but combined it with the earlier

[1] Both quoted in convenient form in Burton, *The Teaching of Jesus—a Source Book*, pp. 201, 206.

national and mundane form to create vivid and shifting schemes, including (1) woes to come in a period of unprecedented suffering ; (2) a period of prosperity and happiness upon this earth ; (3) a final effort by the powers of evil resulting in their defeat ; (4) the resurrection of the dead ; (5) the great judgment and the end of this age ; (6) the new age and the world to come. The first three items belong within the scope of the politico-national hope, the last three in the eschatological. Sometimes the second item is viewed in connection with the reign of a Messiah, sometimes Messiah does not figure. Judgment is sometimes by God and again by His representative. Sometimes item (3) is omitted. But these are the chief themes of the Apocalyptic literature which we must next consider. We can only note here that Judaism as a whole developed the belief in the Hereafter to include the resurrection and the Age to Come, and that *some* Jews busied themselves with the details of this Age to Come. Speculations in this field later became heretical in normative Judaism. The rabbis were not primarily interested in eschatology, although they probably accepted something like the combination of the older national hope and the newer eschatology suggested above, without, of course, the more political emphasis.

II. *Apocalyptic Thought*

It is well to remember that the literature we designate as apocalyptic takes that name from the Book of Revelation, i.e. the Apocalypse. The name of this writing has come to be used of the whole literature of which it is typical. Furthermore the apocalypses,

with the exception of Daniel, have been preserved for us in Greek and by Christians not by Jews. These books were regarded by the Rabbinic writers as heretical, or at any rate extraneous. The final downfall of the Jewish state and the triumph of Pharisaism account for the declining interest in and regard for apocalyptic literature in Judaism, an attitude no doubt accentuated by the Christian enthusiasm for this literature. Christian interest in this literature also waned as time went on, but for other reasons. The triumph of Christianity, and especially its political success, rendered the apocalypses, with the exception of the Book of Revelation which was included in the canon, less timely writings, and it has remained for modern scholars to rediscover these books and their significance for Christian beginnings. We shall consider briefly the rise, the main characteristics, and the influence of this type of thought and writing.

The word apocalypse means "unveiling" or "revelation", and the literature itself supplies the content we give to the word. The apocalypses are unveilings of the invisible world behind and in control of the visible. The seer reveals to his readers the secrets of nature, the interiors of heaven and hell with their occupants, the time and circumstances of the end of the present order of things, and especially the outcome of the present distress in a glorious and triumphant future for God's elect. The mode of revelation is usually vision requiring angelic interpretation. These visions and their interpretations were placed in the mouths of Old Testament worthies such as Daniel, Enoch, Moses, Baruch, Abraham, Solomon, the Twelve Patriarchs. Accordingly, one clue to the dating of these writings is the point at

which the author's pretended foreknowledge passes from his real knowledge of history to his guesses about the future, although this clue often fails us since many of the events are staged in heaven.

This literature had its rise in the unfulfilled prophecies of the Old Testament. Just as the study of the Law produced the Mishnah, so the study of unfulfilled prophecies produced the apocalypses. But the interest in such prophecies was stimulated by immediate historical situations. Daniel, the earliest apocalpyse, was called forth by a fresh crisis. The Jews were not unacquainted with foreign domination from the exile onward, but the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to extirpate the religion by force was something new. The Book of Daniel sets forth in stirring terms the " ideal of fidelity to their religion even unto death, with the promise of a speedy intervention by God, the death of Antiochus, the fall of the Seleucid empire, the establishment of Israel on the throne of the kingdom of its God, and the rising of the martyred dead to have a part in the glory of that Kingdom ". The other apocalypses, including Revelation, were called forth by similar situations of political and religious distress. These crises pressed home on men's minds the problems of the mystery of evil, the prosperity of the wicked, and the adversity of the righteous. How could these grim facts be reconciled with prophetic predictions ? The answer was that the righting of these wrongs involved all the forces of the universe, that the struggle was between God and the powers of this evil world, and that the outcome would be a final catastrophe followed by the signal vindication of God's elect and the establishment of a kingdom of righteousness and peace.

"Standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above His own." The scheme of the future was regularly that of present suffering, future conflict, final triumph. A kind of code language, derived in part from the prophecies of Ezekiel, Zechariah, and later from Daniel, in part from alien sources, became the language of the apocalypses. It was no doubt more intelligible to the first readers than to us, but the main movements of thought are reasonably clear.

To the extent that the apocalypses deal with the problem of theodicy, they bear a certain resemblance to prophecy; but apocalypse never uses the formula, "Thus saith the Lord," nor is its primary purpose to shape men's conduct in the fashion of the prophets, who regarded God's purposes as dependent at least in part upon human behaviour. The apocalyptists are deterministic, viewing history as the working out of a predestined plan, which they explain in whole or in part. Accordingly, while their visions of the future are not wanting in noble ethical features, they are intended to comfort the righteous rather than to call men to repentance. The new emphasis upon Torah as the total revelation of God's will inhibited prophecy and caused the apocalyptic writers to put their messages in the mouths of men of note in sacred history. And the new and wider outlook upon the universe centred attention upon the cosmic and universal aspects of history. Similarly the new doctrine of resurrection turned the minds of many to speculations about the invisible world and its significance for present difficulties.

This literature flourished for about three centuries from the Maccabean rebellion—the Book of Daniel was probably written between 168 and 165 B.C.—

to the final destruction of the Jewish state. The most important apocalypses are the Book of Daniel, the collection of writings gathered under the name of Enoch, from before A.D. 70, and the writings assigned to Baruch, the apocalypse of Ezra (4th Ezra), and the Book of Revelation, after A.D. 70. Of slightly lesser importance are the Assumption of Moses, the Apocalypse of Abraham, the Greek Life of Adam, the Life of Adam and Eve, while the Psalms of Solomon, the Book of Jubilees, the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Sybylline Oracles, and the Zadokite Fragment mingle apocalyptic with other interests. It should be added that persecution led to the production of Christian apocalypses other than the canonical Revelation, e.g. the Ascension of Isaiah and the Apocalypse of Peter. The apocalyptic elements in the New Testament, such as appear in the message of John the Baptist, in Mark xiii and the parallels, Acts i, 1–11 ; iii, 19–23 ; 1 Thess. iv, 14–17, etc., are more familiar to the student.

In characterizing this literature we are on safe ground, since the apocalypses are accessible and their main intent is generally agreed, although dating, analysis, and source study are often in doubt. It is when we attempt to relate these writings to Judaism that we enter the field of subjective judgments. How important are they, all-important or of relatively minor significance for an understanding of Judaism ? When Christian scholars " discovered " the apocalypses in the last half of the nineteenth century, there was a tendency to read Judaism of the first century almost wholly in apocalyptic terms, largely because Judaism was studied with reference to Christian origins, and the influence of apocalyptic ideas upon the New

Testament was obvious. The result was an over-zealous interpretation of both religions in these terms. For example, the conception of God in this literature is largely in imagery derived from oriental ideas of monarchy. He is King, Sovereign, Judge. The God of Judaism, it was assumed, was accordingly a remote and transcendent Deity. This is still an axiom in ordinary Christian teaching. But we have seen that the Pharisaic conception of God is not adequately represented by these titles, indeed that their central emphasis was upon a God whose will was revealed in relation to the most minute details of ordinary life. While it may be argued that the emphasis upon Torah did remove God in another sense, it is clear that the apocalyptic emphasis does not do justice to the whole of their thought about Him. In somewhat the same way apocalyptic ideas were reckoned as controlling the whole content of the Synoptic Gospels, even the most unapocalyptic parts, such as the ethical teachings of Jesus, which were explained as intended solely for the interim before the end of the age.

This enthusiasm for apocalyptic literature was due to the novelty of such ideas, the esoteric and vivid imagery of the language, the accessibility of the apocalypses in modern translations, and the fact that the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are actually earlier in date of writing than the Rabbinic sources. In late years the pendulum is swinging almost to the opposite extreme. The study of Judaism as a religion in its own right, the religion that outlived the destruction of the state ; the study of Pharisaism as revealed in the Rabbinic writings; and the new accessibility of the Rabbinic sources themselves in the works of modern Jewish and Christian scholars—

all this has tended to the view that apocalypticism was a mere incident in the life of Judaism.

It is not yet possible to arrive at a thoroughly objective and balanced view of the state of Judaism in the first century, perhaps because this religion was in a state of flux. But certain facts do define the area within which subjective judgments must move if they are to be reckoned legitimate. *First*, the number and volume of the apocalypses current in the lifetime of Jesus and Paul testify to a considerable popular interest in and acceptance of these ideas. If it be objected that one has but to read these apocalypses to question whether they could ever have been really popular with the masses, the answer is that ideas are often more popular than the books that give them literary permanence. It seems safe to assume that apocalyptic teaching was widespread and popular in the first century. *Second*, it must be remembered that the apocalypses were neither heretical nor sectarian in character, with the obvious exception of the Christian Book of Revelation. In so far as they reflect any attitude toward Torah it is the orthodox attitude. A Pharisee, accordingly, might have shared in these speculative expectations without ceasing to be a Pharisee, just as, conversely, his apocalyptic enthusiasm would not exhaust his whole conception of religion. *Third*, the revolutions marking the end of the Jewish state likewise marked the decline of interest in this type of hope, another way of saying that the apocalypses may have been influential in arousing men to direct political action, even if the Zealot desire to "hasten the end" did not find explicit sanction in this literature. *Fourth*, we must be careful to distinguish between normative Judaism and the Judaism contemporary

with the rise of Christianity. The Gospels remain a primary, if sectarian, source for this contemporary Judaism.

Thus we see that the apocalypses witness to a popular type of expectation, not in necessary conflict with what was to become normative Judaism, but certainly not necessary to it. These hopes survived, were reorganized and transformed both in Judaism and in Christianity. Their relation to the Christian movement must be considered in a later chapter.

SECTION III

THE OUTREACH OF JUDAISM

CHAPTER EIGHT

JUDAISM AND HELLENISM

We have discussed in the Introductory Chapter the aggressive Hellenizing policy of the Seleucid kings, who undertook to root out Judaism by force of arms, only to be met by amazingly heroic and successful resistance under Maccabean leadership. But if Hellenism could not be imposed upon the Jews by force neither could they resist it by force alone, for this new world temper, this complex of ideas and of aspirations seeped through all walls of division whether political, religious, social, racial, or economic. Hellenism was in the very air breathed by the men of the first century ; it was the *Zeitgeist*, comparable to our modern "scientific spirit", and perhaps no better understood by the average man ; it was the pervading and invading mind-set of the millions who must in the main have been quite unconscious of the tidal forces bearing them along. We have noted too that Judaism came in contact with Hellenism at a time when the Jews were coming into consciousness of their own culture ; that they faced a degenerate or at any rate second-hand Hellenism, and revolted not from Plato and the great Greeks but from Antioch, the groves of Daphne, and the ways of soldiers, brothel-keepers and traders, at least at the beginning of their

contact with this new cultural world. This may account for the peculiarly stubborn resistance of the Jews. But Judaism was not only exposed to Hellenism, but maintained itself against the tide in extraordinary ways, and also yielded to it in ways equally unique.

I. *The Dispersion*

The fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the subsequent deportation of many Jews, especially of the upper classes, to Babylonia was the beginning of a scattering which continued throughout the following centuries and assumed larger proportions under Alexander and the Macedonian kings. The Old Testament word for this scattering was " the captivity ", but the Greek equivalent διασπορά, dispersion, is now generally used for both the voluntary and involuntary scattering of the Jews throughout the ancient world.[1] Before the time of Alexander the dispersion of Jews was largely in the Eastern world. We have to remember that there were many captivities, not just one, and that the Assyrian kings repeatedly invaded Palestine and carried away captives before the more systematic Babylonian deportations began. Many Jews settled permanently in Babylonia, speaking the language of the country and sharing its life so far as loyalty to their faith would permit. Those who lapsed from the faith do not figure in our reckoning. Jews migrated to Egypt voluntarily, and we learn of a colony of Jews there as early as the time of Jeremiah (Jer. xliii, 7). According to Nehemiah, the Jews were present and

[1] Although διασπορά in the LXX " has generally the sense of violent dispersion ". Cf. Ropes, *I.C.C.*, *Epistle of James*, p. 120 ff.

of some importance in Persia. Josephus has a tale of the two Jewish brothers, Asineus and Anileus, who played the rôle of fierce warriors in the Parthian empire. [1] And finally the New Testament (Acts ii, 9) witnesses to the presence of Jews in Jerusalem from Parthia, Media, Elam, and Mesopotamia.

But with the conquests of Alexander the Jewish dispersion took another direction. Hitherto Judaism had belonged to the East ; now it began to assimilate, outwardly at least, with the Western world. Jews who had spoken Hebrew and then Aramaic henceforth were to speak the *Koine* also. Jewish colonies and communities begin to appear in Syria, Antioch, Damascus, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, Cyprus, Cyrene, and Rome. Paul found his compatriots in all the towns he visited, and his purpose to go to Spain (Rom. xv, 24, 28) perhaps suggests the presence of Jews there also.

Outside Jerusalem and its environs the Jews were a dispersion even in Palestine, for cities built on the Greek model or Hellenized by the Seleucids formed a network about Judæa. The Maccabees had attempted to Judaize Palestine by force, but with indifferent success. Galilee was " Galilee of the Gentiles " and only became the centre of Judaism after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. " Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans," is Matthew's account of Jesus's instructions to his disciples (x, 5), and whatever the significance of this verse for Christian origins, it witnesses to the proximity of the Gentile world.

[1] *Antt.*, xviii, 9, 1–9.

II. *The Unity of the Jews of the Dispersion*

Although the little Jewish community in and about Jerusalem constituted only a fraction of the Jews in the world of the first century, Judaism maintained an extraordinary degree of unity. Several factors contributed to this unity, so unparalleled and so surprising to the Roman authorities. Chief among these were the nature of Judaism as a religion and the place of the synagogue as its unique and central institution. Jerusalem remained the focus both sentimentally and actually of the scattered race, but Judaism as revealed in Torah was not bound to a single geographical centre. To be sure, Jews from all parts of the world assembled in the Holy City to celebrate the great annual feasts ; there they worshipped in the Temple, offering sacrifices where alone sacrifice was legitimate ; and the annual half-shekel tax, paid to maintain the Temple cult, bound them to the Temple-centred system. But that it was the One Law, rather than the One Holy City and its Temple, that actually integrated Judaism is evident from the unity which survived the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. No doubt, this unity could not have developed and persisted in the Dispersion without a considerable period during which Jerusalem still stood as the visible and tangible focus of the religion. But when this outward symbol disappeared, the inner coherence of Judaism was already well secured.

The chief instrument in achieving this coherence and uniformity was undoubtedly the synagogue. After a careful survey of Jewish thought in the first

century including Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and the various pietistic sects, Zealots, and separatists such as the Zadokite party of Damascus, Branscomb concludes that there was "universal acceptance of the Mosaic legislation and teaching as the ultimate sanction of Jewish society. To disavow this removed one from the pale of Judaism".[1] Moreover in this legislation, the written and oral Torah were "inextricably united". Even in so-called Hellenistic Judaism as represented by Philo of Alexandria, there was no denial of the authority of the Law in its actual requirements, however allegorically its interpretation along philosophical lines might be developed. This unity was due to the synagogue. "By the time of the Christian era probably every large city in the Roman Empire had its local body of Jews with their synagogue or synagogues."[2] There were synagogues for Jews of the Dispersion in Jerusalem itself. We read in Acts vi, 9 that "there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue of the Libertines (i.e. Jewish freedmen who had been slaves in Rome), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen". Whether this reference is to be understood as indicating one, two, or more such synagogues, it is conclusive for the existence and importance of the synagogue as such. When neither language nor geographical location ensured the solidarity of Judaism, the synagogue and devotion to the Law, both written and oral, guaranteed unity.

[1] *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 70.
[2] Bevan in *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, pt. ii, p. 24.

III. *The Status of the Jewish Communities in the Dispersion*

The stubborn adherence of the Jews to the peculiar beliefs and practices of their religion had a twofold consequence : on the one hand, it contributed to their unpopularity in the Gentile world ; on the other, it won for them special privileges in the Roman Empire. The eclectic spirit of the day made it difficult if not impossible for the outsider to understand and appreciate Jewish intolerance in matters of their faith. Why could not the Jews conform to current customs, often comparatively innocent in themselves, and amounting to little more than formal expressions of loyalty to Rome ? But they were doggedly persistent in refusing to conform. Now from the administrative viewpoint the main objective of colonial government, then as now, was loyalty and peace. Once the Jews convinced their rulers of their loyalty to government and of their unshakable devotion to their Law, a *modus vivendi* resulted and Judaism became an allowed religion, *religio licita*. The Jewish communities were delegated authority for dealing with their own members, and were released from certain requirements obnoxious to them religiously, e.g. the right to pray for the Emperor in the synagogue instead of offering worship to him or to his Genius. It was the Jewish authorities in Greece and Asia Minor of whom Paul wrote, " of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one " (2 Cor. xi, 24). On the whole the Roman government favoured the Jews, although they were subject to local persecution. Perhaps their unpopularity with their Gentile fellow-townsmen was increased by this very favouritism. Although

banished from Rome in 139 B.C., again in A.D. 19 under Tiberius and under Claudius (A.D. 41–54), no doubt the charge in each case was political. Of course the great rebellion of A.D. 66–70 altered the attitude of Rome, and they were dealt with in summary and terrible fashion, but, in the main and from the viewpoint of the Empire, the tolerance shown the Jews is at once extraordinary politically speaking and a testimony to the unique qualities of this people. Special consideration from government was important in the further consolidation of Judaism and in the growth of the Christian movement until it definitely broke with Judaism.

Were Jews as communities eligible to become citizens in the several Greek cities? Josephus reports that in Alexandria they had the status of citizens, but we cannot be certain whether this means that the Jews became full citizens or that they received privileges equivalent to citizenship. Individual Jews did become citizens, either by purchasing the right or as a reward for special services to the state. Paul, who according to Acts xxii, 28 was born a Roman citizen, is the classic example, although we are not informed as to the circumstances conditioning his citizenship.

IV. *Hellenistic Influences upon Judaism*

From the viewpoint of the larger world, Jewish resistance to Hellenism is the most striking feature of the relationship. Eventually Judaism deliberately chose the path of exclusivism, preserving its own life by withdrawal instead of by compromise or conquest. But here again we have to recall that we are concerned

with the Judaism of the first century as affording us the background of the New Testament. All Jews of that century and especially the Jews of the Dispersion were affected by current Hellenism, and some Jews were profoundly influenced by it.

The widespread use of the Greek language constituted the most obvious and inescapable Hellenistic influence to which the Jews were subjected. The *Koine* became the common medium of intercourse around the eastern Mediterranean. This modified Greek attained the status of a world speech. In Egypt farmers and tradesmen were transacting business and carrying on correspondence in Greek ; in many places east of the Euphrates it was understood ; in Rome Greek was spoken and written by the educated. As early as the third century B.C. Jews in Egypt had so far forgotten Hebrew that it was necessary to translate the Pentateuch into Greek, and subsequently the rest of the Old Testament was translated into the same language for the benefit of Greek-speaking Jews. This translation is known as the Septuagint.

" The Greek Old Testament," writes Porter,[1] " is surely the most significant translation in the history of our western civilization." First, because it was a means of preserving Jewish faith in the Hellenistic world. Second, because it was an instrument of propaganda in that world. Third, because it became the Bible of the early Christian Church, mediating Judaism to the larger world. The first two of these propositions are only apparently contradictory ; although it was the Jewish Scriptures which were translated, a certain admixture of Greek ideas could not fail to accompany the Greek language. Philo was not consciously

[1] *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xlviii, p. 11.

disloyal to Judaism, but he regarded the Greek text of the Old Testament as infallible and "never even found out that the Greek term Kyrios (Lord) stood for the Hebrew IHVH".[1] We have negative testimony to the importance of the Septuagint for Christianity in the fact that the Jews finally abandoned it in favour of a more literal translation of the Old Testament by the proselyte Aquila. Accordingly, the use of the Greek language carried their religion over into the realm of Greek thought, at any rate potentially, as well as into Greek speech.

Some Jews followed up this lead by a definite propaganda directed to the Greek world. Oriental religious ideas and practices were popular in the Mediterranean world, due to the eclectic and syncretistic spirit of the times. The high ethical tone of Judaism, its uncompromising loyalty to the one invisible God together with its Oriental origin, could not fail to attract the serious-minded, even if insistence upon circumcision and the dietary laws repelled the majority. We learn of proselytes, some of them persons of standing, especially women. The New Testament bears witness to such an active propaganda and its effectiveness; in Matthew xxiii, 15 we read that the Pharisees would "compass sea and land to make one proselyte"; according to Acts xiii, 44 ff., the synagogues were largely attended by non-Jews who seem to have been called "God-fearers"; and Timothy is an example of one who had a Jewish mother and was carefully instructed in the Scriptures, yet who had not been circumcised. It was from among these non-Jewish or half-Jewish frequenters of the synagogue that Paul won his first converts. Bevan thinks this

[1] Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

situation must have ceased to exist by the end of the first century due to the growing exclusiveness of the Jews after A.D. 70.

A Jewish literature designed to controvert if not to convince Gentiles arose in Alexandria. Very few Greek or Roman writers had a civil word to say for the Jews. They charged the Jews with having contributed nothing to invention, art or culture, and poured scorn upon their claims to superiority. The Septuagint itself was not suited to controvert this charge, being written in the main in barbarous Greek. But the Jewish writers of Egypt rallied to the defence of their faith, and a long literary war ensued; a writing like Josephus's *Against Apion* shows the nature of the charges and of the defence. Jewish protagonists maintained the antiquity and glory of their race, the culture and might of Moses, and even that Plato and others had borrowed directly from Moses through an earlier and hypothetical Greek version of his works. They went to the length of fabricating writings and sayings attributed to Sophocles, Menander, and the Sibyl acknowledging the superiority of Judaism. Fragments of the writings of Aristobulus, the predecessor of Philo, are extant in Clement's *Stromata*, and show that he was concerned to get rid of the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament. Philo the Elder (2nd century B.C.) and other Jews tried their hands at poetry after Greek models with the same purpose of defending Judaism to the Greek world.

V. *Hellenistic Judaism: Philo and Josephus*

If we have evidence of Jews who yielded to Hellenism to the extent of adopting the weapons of the larger world in the defence of their faith, we

also know of Jews who set forth that faith in terms of current thought from a more systematic, less controversial motive. Such a writing is the *Wisdom of Solomon*, variously dated from 100 to 50 B.C. The writer, a Hellenistic Jew of Egypt, gives us, according to one scholar, "the earliest important attempt to achieve a working synthesis between the truths taught by Moses and the Prophets ('Revealed Religion') and the best elements of heathen philosophy ('Natural Religion')."[1] There are clear evidences of his knowledge of Greek literature; R. H. Charles thinks he knew Plato's *Phaedo* and *Republic*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia Socratis* and perhaps Heraclitus; he is familiar with Stoic terms and forms of argument, and holds to the soul's immateriality, immortality, and pre-existence, the creation of the world out of formless matter, and that Wisdom is an immanent principle ordering the world.[2] The importance of this writer's doctrine of Wisdom for Christian theology and for the New Testament cannot be discussed here, except to point out that his approach was clearly from the Old Testament, especially from the classic representation of Wisdom in Proverbs viii, and that his personification of Wisdom—he never uses the word Logos—is never a personalization. Less developed in the Hellenizing process than was Philo, he nevertheless points in the same direction.

The classic example of Hellenistic Judaism is Philo of Alexandria. His importance for Christianity can scarcely be over-emphasized; indeed, he almost

[1] C. Harris, *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, edited by Gore, pt. ii. p. 65.

[2] R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, The Wisdom of Solomon.*

got the " status of a Christian Father ", although his concern was to Judaize the Hellenistic world. Porter remarks that Philo was rejected by official Judaism " because they judged that such efforts as his involved instead a Hellenizing of Judaism ".[1] He was free from the objectionable glorification of Judaism noted above, and honestly believed that a deep and real affinity existed between Judaism, on the one hand, and the teachings of Plato and the Stoics on the other. He continued to observe literally the precepts of the written Law, finding the reconciliation of his two loyalties by means of allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures.

It is impossible to do justice to Philo's many-sided and fascinating contribution to thought in the brief paragraph at our disposal. A contemporary of both Jesus and Paul, he betrays no knowledge of or contact with the Christian movement. The real purpose of his voluminous writings was to set forth the relation of revealed religion, as embodied in inspired Scriptures (the Septuagint), to the truth of Greek philosophy, also divine to him. Although unconscious of disloyalty to Judaism, he was forced, by the very problem he undertook to solve and by the solutions he proposed, to diverge in fundamental ways from normative Judaism. For example, in the doctrine of God, Philo's solution of the obvious differences between Greek and Hebrew thought was reached by superimposing the metaphysical God of Greek philosophy above the living God of Jewish religion. But this compelled him to deal with the characteristic problem of Western systems of philosophy, i.e. the relation of this metaphysical God to the real world human and

[1] *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xlviii, p. 12.

physical. Naturally he found the solution in Platonic and Stoic terms. But whereas for Plato the idea of the good *is* God and for Stoicism the immanent Logos *is* God, Philo started with the living, personal God of Judaism, who reveals Himself in history. He had to find a middle term. This middle term for Philo was the Logos, in God and in man. He had no systematic and thoroughly consistent doctrine of the Logos—relying upon figures of speech, such as the streaming forth of light from its source, to illustrate the relationship between God and the Logos—and the very presuppositions of his thought show how far he was from the prologue of the Fourth Gospel or the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews ; he could never have identified the Logos with an historic person. Yet we see how this type of thinking influenced Christian theology faced with a similar problem and moving out from the historic Jesus as a starting point. We also see how far Philo travelled from the orthodox Judaism of his day.

Josephus is the other best known representative of Hellenistic Judaism, but it is not easy to appraise his personal religious position. The motive inspiring his many writings was to prove the antiquity and excellence of the Jewish people and their institutions. But, although he indignantly denies the many slanders against Judaism, he really tells us very little about Judaism as a religion and less about his own religion. Foakes Jackson thinks he " had a genuine admiration for his ancestral religion, and his exposition of it confirms what he says in the *Life*, that he was both a priest and a Pharisee. He is most careful to assure us that the preservation of the Law is in the hands of the priesthood, and he is equally insistent on such a

Pharisaic doctrine as that of the resurrection and the future life, as well as on the humane purpose of the Mosaic legislation. But he has no sympathy whatever with those Pharisees who were disposed to side with the extreme patriots, whom he frequently calls 'robbers' or banditti (λῃσταί). If we employ the language of the Gospels, which after all are our best contemporary authorities, we should describe Josephus as both a Pharisee and an Herodian; his religion being Pharisaic, and his political views Herodian".[1] And Moore suggests "that Josephus, like most of the aristocratic priesthood to which he belonged, had little interest in religion for its own sake, and that his natural antipathy to all excess of zeal was deepened by the catastrophe which religious fanatics had brought upon his people".[2]

That a liberal Judaism, which actually threw over circumcision and the dietary laws, existed is probable from the logic of the situation and from the fact that Philo criticizes such an attitude,[3] from the story of the Jews who persuaded King Izates not to be circumcised,[4] and from Strabo's description of the Jews.[5] Perhaps Saul's persecution of the Christians was inspired, in part at least, by contact with a similar "liberal movement" among the Jews of the Dispersion which "minimized, allegorized or rejected outright the external Jewish practices".[6] But naturally we learn little of such a tendency from the orthodox Jewish sources. We may suppose that two factors led

[1] *Josephus and the Jews*, p. 33.
[2] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. i, p. 210.
[3] *De Migrat. Abrah.* 260.
[4] Josephus, *Antt.*, xx, 2, 3 f.
[5] *Geography*, xvi, 2, 37.
[6] Cf. Branscomb, *Jesus and the Law of Moses*, p. 275 f.

to the disappearance of any liberal Judaism of the Hellenistic type : the growth of Christianity on the one hand, and the rigid, self-inclosed character of normative Judaism on the other. The Acts would indicate that many of Paul's converts came from this group, and Christianity was ideally equipped to win Jews who entertained such liberal views of their own faith. Normative Judaism, by withdrawing from all Hellenistic tendencies and by cultivating its own treasures, closed the door to liberal movements, and Hellenistic Judaism ceased to exist.

VI. *Conclusion*

Judaism met the challenge of Hellenism in two ways. One way was that of armed resistance. The wars of A.D. 66–70 and A.D. 135 resulted from the fierce, uncontrollable uprising of the masses inspired by revolutionary leaders against Roman rule. But like the Maccabean revolt, these wars were more than political movements ; they included, if in a less pure form, the religious motive. Pharisees were swept into both wars, but probably more because they sought to maintain their place of leadership than from the purely religious motives which had inspired their predecessors, the *Hasidim*. The disastrous consequences discredited both political action as such and the literature which had fed the flames, the apocalypses.

The other way open to the Jews was to meet Hellenism on its own ground, and to win the verdict in the arena of thought and with weapons of the larger world. This way too was tried but abandoned by Judaism, for the Jewish leaders saw quite clearly that

Greek thought could not be amalgamated with Revealed Religion except by Hellenizing Judaism. It is significant that both Philo and Josephus were given currency by the Christian, not by the Jewish Church. Judaism refused to enter the world of Hellenism; it remained for Christianity to take this step.

Chapter Nine

THE LEGACY OF JUDAISM

The contribution of Judaism to civilization in general lies beyond the scope of this study.[1] We have to consider in this chapter the legacy of Judaism to Christianity, and in the following chapters the ways in which Judaism influenced the writers of the New Testament.

Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and indeed most of the writers of our New Testament were Jews. Much that is assumed and much that is explicit in their teaching and writing derives directly from Judaism. This has been acknowledged throughout the Christian centuries, although opinions differ widely as to the nature and extent of this debt. Christian apologists have tended to minimize the debt or to assign it to the religion of Israel, especially to the great prophets, in distinction from the Judaism contemporary with Christian origins. To do this seems to enhance the originality and uniqueness of Christianity. Ignorance of the sources regarded by the Jews themselves as authoritative for their religion has contributed to this apologetic motive to minimize the influence of Judaism. On the other hand, the ever-increasing knowledge of Hellenism and its unquestioned influence in the development and spread of Christianity in the second and

[1] Cf. *Legacy of Israel*, edited by E. R. Bevan, Oxford University Press, 1928.

succeeding centuries has operated in the same direction. Bearing in mind that ideas can never be assigned with mathematical accuracy to their sources—even if we waive the possibility of " new " ideas—we have nevertheless to reckon with all the facts, regardless of their effect upon our views of originality. When scholars, equally competent, assign a New Testament word or idea, on the one hand to the Jewish background and on the other to the Hellenistic, we are warranted in concluding either that the scholar is biased by his special knowledge, and so must not be allowed to press the parallelism unduly, or that we are observing the only kind of newness or originality possible in the realm of thought, i.e. a relative rather than absolute kind. Admitting then that a student who approaches the New Testament from a study of Judaism is almost certain to find Jewish influence on every page, we are nevertheless bound to look for these influences and then to leave the interpretation of our findings to the philosophic historian.

There is, however, an added incentive for tracing Jewish-Christian parallels from the larger field of the philosophy of religion. Both Christianity and Judaism are historical religions, not because they have histories—every religion has a history—but because both hold that God has revealed His will in history, and that He has a purpose for human history in its entirety. Christians share this faith with Jews in distinction from all religions denying the significance of human life. Neither religion is content to allow its founders and prophets to be resolved into myths ; both insist that the factual has a cosmic and eternal meaning. Accordingly, it is important to trace all possible relationships between the two faiths, both

because they share a common origin and because in this one respect at least they represent a single type of religion.

I. *One God and the Same God*

The monotheism of Christianity is based upon the monotheism of Judaism. The earlier New Testament writings do not argue about the existence of God, nor do they contain speculations on His nature and attributes. To be sure, faith in such a God challenges and points to philosophic meditations by the very absoluteness of His demands upon men, and Christianity developed significant views about God due to the Christian faith that the one God had revealed Himself afresh and this time finally in Jesus, the Christ. But the fact, that in the earlier writings the speculative tendency is restrained, witnesses to the influence of Jewish monotheism.

The distinctive quality of the Jewish belief in one God was not reached through philosophic inquiry but through their experience as a people, interpreted by the prophets. Their God was a convincing reality, a living God. This meant not simply or mainly that He actually exists, but that His existence is evident in His deeds rather than in the reflective processes of the human mind. Late Judaism did not abandon this belief. We have seen that the doctrine of revelation, so central in Judaism, was entirely in harmony with this conception, indeed that it was the attempt to relate the will of the living God to the details of life. It is possible to argue that this development of Torah actually weakened faith in a living active God by factoring His will into the minute requirements of

legalism, but certainly there was little consciousness in Judaism itself of such a result. On the contrary, passionate loyalty to the traditions had its ground in the faith that even the most intimate details of daily life came within the scope of God's will as revealed in the Torah.

This belief in a God whose will is known in definite historic acts in the past, and in the Law defining His will in relation to concrete situations in the present, preserved the balance between ideas of God's transcendence and His immanence. As we have seen, apocalyptic literature tended to emphasize the transcendence of God, but Pharisaism and the Rabbinic writings stressed God's interest in the concerns of man here and now. But there could be no danger of pantheism, in spite of the circumambient Hellenism. However immanent God is, He is always a Will among conflicting wills, and His presence is set forth in terms of commands for the conduct of life. Union, communion with God and all mystical experiences are characteristically set forth in Judaism in terms of the inner response to the Divine Will.

There is the same balance of conception in regard to the character of God. Anthropomorphic representations are restrained by the doctrine of God's Holiness ; His justice is balanced by His love. Here again, it may be argued that there is more emphasis on the justice than on the love of God, and that the Fatherhood of God is more frequently related to the nation than to the individual ; but neither the love of God nor his fatherly concern for the individual is wanting in the Judaism contemporary with the rise of Christianity. One-sided pictures of the God of Judaism are due to absorption in apocalyptic literature, on the one hand,

or the Rabbinic literature on the other. Just what ideas of God were most influential in the rise of Christianity remains an important problem of interpretation, but it is equally important to recognize that this balance of ideas obtained in the religion of Judaism as a whole. In a modern sermon, a well-known Christian preacher writes, "Jewish theology knows nothing, or very little, of the worth of the individual. Its unit is always the nation." Now nothing could be further from the facts than this sweeping statement. One of the characteristic features of Judaism was its emphasis upon the individual, although the older national note was not superseded. It is to be hoped that recent Christian studies in Judaism will make it impossible for intelligent Christians to fall into this particular form of error.

The debt owed to the Jewish faith in God by the New Testament writers is obvious. The God of Judaism and the God of early Christianity are essentially one God and the same God. Wherein do they differ? The difference is not to be discovered by comparing or contrasting the character of God in the two religions. Both believed in a God who has revealed Himself in history, but the Christians held that God has revealed Himself again, and this time finally and completely, in a fresh act, the sending of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. God who spoke through Moses and the prophets, and in a sense through the rabbis, had spoken in the Christ. The New Testament was created by the faith that something revolutionary had occurred, God had acted. This is the secret of the certainty and the joy of the New Testament. It may be argued with force that this fresh and final act of God throws a flood of light upon His character and being, or that the

conviction itself rests back upon Jesus's teaching about God, which is in advance of or even essentially different from the Jewish views ; but the Christian writers themselves insisted that it was the same God who had thus made known His will and His nature. In the very nature of the case the early Christians believed in the living God even more intensely than did the Jews, for had not God proved Himself to be the living God by this evident expression of His active will ? It is a mistake in method to characterize New Testament Christianity as belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. This is a judgment as to the permanent significance of Christianity under changed conditions. It may be true or false. But no New Testament writer so characterizes the new faith. It was the God who is known by His acts, i.e. the God of Judaism, revealed anew in the Christ and supremely in the great acts of the Death and Resurrection, who created and directed the new community according to the writers of the New Testament. That within the New Testament itself such a faith led to non-Jewish ideas about the character and nature of God, is evident. Yet the controlling influence of the Jewish doctrine of God is never wholly lost.

II. *The Old Testament Scriptures*

Christians claimed that the Jewish Scriptures belonged to them. Perhaps this is the most striking proof that they were not conscious of believing in a new and different God. We have noted that they made such use of the Septuagint that this Greek version was finally rejected by orthodox Judaism in favour of a more literal translation. It was not until

the second century, so far as our evidence goes, that the Christian claim to the Jewish Scriptures was disputed from within the Christian movement itself. Marcion (*ca.* 140) argued that the God of the Old Testament is not the God of Christianity. He wrote a book called *Antitheses*—" Look on this picture and on this "—contrasting the Old Testament God and the God of the Gospels. He pointed out the difference between the God revealed in the story of Elisha and the bears who devoured the children and the God of Jesus who took the children in his arms. The former, he held, was an inferior God who did indeed make the world but was not the God of Jesus. Jesus is the stranger, said Marcion, who came into an alien world not made by his God. In this alien world Jesus found the few who were his own. The church had to face this challenge : should the Old Testament be retained as a Christian book ? The answer was that of the New Testament—Marcion had seen that he could only maintain his position by rejecting large sections of the New Testament— : the God of the Jewish Scriptures was the God of the Christians, and those Scriptures were to be retained as witnessing in prophecy to Christ and as interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament was, and has continued to be, regarded as a substantial legacy of Judaism to Christianity. The New Testament writers do not question its authority, although they use it in varying degrees and in varied ways. Here we can only note the outstanding results of this legacy. First, a negative result. However powerfully the oral law, not yet codified in the first century, influenced the thought of Jesus and his first followers, it was not to be a

permanent element in Christianity, being taken over in an assimilated rather than in a literary form. Christians one may almost say developed their own traditional Law, for very early a controlling principle for the use of Scripture was developed, the testimony of these Scriptures to Christ. This became not only an interpretive but also a selective principle, as is evidenced by the fact that the New Testament writers make little use of the great mass of sacrificial legislation in the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews is the sole example of any large use of this material, and his method is determined by other than strictly Jewish influences. Of course, it must be remembered that Judaism itself was shifting its centre from Temple to synagogue in this period, but even the author of Hebrews is concerned to show by erudite interpretation of the Old Testament material that the entire sacrificial system has its final meaning in Jesus, the great high-priest. Accordingly, the early Christians in taking with them the Old Testament did actually free themselves of the traditional interpretations fast becoming central in normative Judaism, and substituted for Pharisaic tradition a tradition of their own.

It has often been argued that the decision to take over the Old Testament into the Christian movement was a serious mistake. Of course, historically speaking there was no "decision" as such. The Jewish Scriptures were the sacred writings of the early Christians, and the only "decision" possible would have been to abandon them, an alternative which did not present itself to them until a later time. The Old Testament was retained at a price. With it the Christians took over ideas of date, authorship, and inspiration resulting in a confusing of moral standards

through the centuries. Without the concept of development to aid, the early church was compelled to resort to allegory, typology, and rabbinic methods to harmonize their sacred writings and to develop their own tradition. Yet the Christian tradition, i.e. that Christ is proclaimed in Scripture, however formally and artificially maintained, made possible, for those who had eyes to see, a way out of the classic dilemma of Judaism, revelation and progress, by substituting a person for a theory.

III. *The Jewish Idea of the Law*

The idea of revelation as embodied in the Law, written and oral, was central in Judaism, and all the major movements within the religion were true to this conception. Now it is a mistake to interpret this view of the Law as wholly a liability from the Christian viewpoint. Paul's dramatic fight for a law-free gospel dominates the New Testament outside the Gospels, and we tend to forget the important contribution of the Law to Paul himself and to the entire Christian movement. The Law meant that religion is not a matter of belief only but also, indeed mainly, a matter of individual behaviour. The rabbis were not unaware of the dangers accompanying the emphasis upon observances, such as hypocrisy, false perspective, and a mere outward and formal religion. But the Law anchored religion to life here and now. Among all the religious movements of the first century, Judaism was conspicuous for its ethical demands. If it made no clear distinction between ethical and ceremonial requirements, Judaism did carry along the ethical with the ceremonial. Paul viewed with horror

any suggestion that the gospel was not the very spring and source of the good life, as the Corinthian correspondence proves, and Christianity resisted as did no other Hellenistic religion the attempt to reduce it to a mere " mystery ". This was due, not only to the ethical teaching of Jesus, but also to the long history of the religion of the Jews culminating in the conception of the Law.

In a time of shifting and uncertain human values men turn instinctively to another world. Other-worldliness, the longing for salvation in or out of this world, was characteristic of Hellenism, although taking a wide variety of forms. Christianity did not create this atmosphere, nor was it responsible for the decline of reason, as has been freely charged. One has but to note the popularity of astralism, of magic and the Mysteries, all widely influential when the Christian gospel was first proclaimed, to see that Christianity came into such a world but did by no means create it. That the Christian faith never wholly succumbed to these influences, however profoundly affected by them, was due to the historical emphasis in the religion itself. Its " Saviour God " had been an historic person, who lived the life of a man and whose teachings about behaviour in concrete human situations were cherished and transmitted by the church. This emphasis enabled Christianity to adapt its message to a world which became in time less other-worldly, and it can be maintained that the Christian faith was itself a creative factor in this change. But here again, Judaism with its living God of history and its Law was the larger background of this stabilizing factor in the new faith. Judaism was never exclusively concerned with the hereafter ; Pharisees might be

swept into political action or into extravagant apocalyptic hopes, but their faith was centred in the Law which focused attention upon behaviour here and now as the prerequisite even for the most fantastic speculations about the future. This was a positive contribution to the Christian faith, not always fully appreciated by its adherents.

IV. *The Messianic Faith*

Christianity has always had as its centre belief in the uniqueness of its founder, Jesus the Christ. Although the word Christ has ceased to mean for the present-day Christian what it did for the first disciples, it remains a part of the legacy of Judaism. Many are actually unaware to-day that the word Christ is other than a proper name. Others would hold that Jesus's uniqueness rests upon the nature of his own personality, or upon his teaching, or upon theological grounds hardly deriving from the Jewish background. Nevertheless, the term "Christ" or "Messiah", derived from Jewish hopes, furnished his first followers with a basis for their faith in him, and shaped for a considerable time their views as to the nature of his unique significance. The coming of an "Anointed One" was one way, not the only way, in which the Jews expressed their faith that God was in control of history and would manifest that control decisively in the near or more remote future through a divine agent. Especially in apocalyptic literature was the Messianic hope crystallized into definite forms which were influential in the early Christian movement. Some of these forms may be regarded as unfortunate in the limitations they placed upon Christian thought,

but even these ways of thinking, surveyed in an earlier chapter, served to express the Christian faith that God had acted and would act again in Jesus the Christ.

But the influence of Judaism upon the interpretation of the fact of Jesus was profound even beyond the apocalyptic views associated with him. For example, the immense significance of the Johannine view of Christ as the Logos of God, as carrying the Christian gospel into the world of Hellenistic thought, can scarcely be over-emphasized. Jesus is the Christ but his Messianic dignity is translated into a language congenial to the larger non-Jewish world. "There has been much discussion as to whether John's conception of the Logos owes more to Jewish or to Alexandrian influences—a singularly futile dispute since John must have been indebted to both ; if he was able adequately to present the Gospel to a heterogeneous Church, it was just because in the forefront of his Gospel so many converging streams of thought are gathered into one clear pool in which is reflected the face of Jesus Christ." [1] The Fourth Gospel maintains the continuity of the Christian faith as well as interprets it to a larger audience, a continuity made possible in part at least because Jewish interpretations of God's dealings with men lent themselves to the new forms of thought. The whole Wisdom literature offered such a bridge. Even for Paul, Christ was the "wisdom of God". It is not necessary, if it were possible, to assess with accuracy the proportions of Jewish and Hellenistic thought in the New Testament writings to see that Judaism had within itself the roots of those developments which were to carry the new faith so far beyond the borders of Israel.

[1] Macgregor, *Gospel of John*, Introd., p. xxxv.

V. *The External Results of the Jewish Background of Christianity*

The first Christians were not only Jews racially but they were practising Jews, frequenting the Temple and the synagogues, some of them no doubt up to the year 70. This meant an initial period of hesitation when it was not clear to the Christians themselves whether they were within or without Judaism. An external result of this close association was that the new faith had a breathing spell before persecution began. For a generation at least there was no organized persecution of Christians as such. This gave time for the new movement to spread and to consolidate itself. Judaism was an allowed religion, officially at least, and Christianity shared its privileges. For example, when Paul was brought before Gallio (Acts xviii, 12 ff.) the latter refused to have anything to do with him, on the ground that as a Roman official he was not minded to deal with " questions about words and names and your own law ". Paul was free from religious persecution as a state measure. Possibly Luke over-emphasizes this freedom both in his Gospel and in the Acts, but it seems likely that early Christianity did share for a time the official immunity won by the Jews. We have noted already the rôle of the synagogue in the missionary activity of the Christians.

Chapter Ten

JUDAISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

" There is scarcely a chapter in the New Testament the full understanding of which does not demand some knowledge of Jewish religion, doctrinal or practical." [1] To be sure, the sacred writings of the new faith were produced by a religious community already separated from Judaism, but the early Christians insisted that it was the Jews who had fallen away from the historic faith culminating in Jesus. The collection of Christian writings, eventually to take its place alongside the Jewish Scriptures, came to be known as " the New Covenant or Testament " as over against " the Old Covenant or Testament ", and both the idea and the phrase were furnished by a prophetic passage (Jeremiah xxxi, 31–3). Thus the Christians had at once a Scriptural name and a legal title in the Jewish sense for their sacred writings (cf. Luke xxii, 20 ; 1 Cor. xi, 25 ; 2 Cor. iii, 6, 14 ; Heb. viii, 6 ff.).

One has but to turn the pages of the New Testament to note the more obvious evidences of Jewish influence. Naturally these influences are most apparent in observances, institutions, and religious parties. We think at once of the Law and the works of the Law, including the dietary rules and the purificatory legislation ; of the Sabbath, Circumcision, Almsgiving,

[1] W. O. E. Oesterley in Gore's *New Commentary on Holy Scripture*, pt. iii, p. 9.

Fasting and Prayer; of the Temple and the Synagogue; of Pharisees and Sadducees, Priests and Scribes, Samaritans and Herodians. We have seen that other Jewish movements, not so explicit in the New Testament writings, such as the Zealots, the "People of the Land", and the Apocalyptists, were also influential. All these religious practices, institutions, and parties, whether accepted, transformed, or rejected, helped to form the background for the Christian writings. The influence of Jewish doctrines is not always so apparent, but it is not less important. It is not at once obvious, for example, how profoundly the Christian writers were influenced by the Jewish doctrines of God, of revelation, and of the future life; only the study of the Hellenistic world into which Christianity was to enter brings into clear relief the essentially Jewish cast of Christian thought even when translated into new forms.

In this chapter we can only indicate some of the more obvious areas in the New Testament writings where a knowledge of Judaism is essential to a thorough understanding. A word of warning may be in place here, namely that the exact extent of Jewish influence in any given passage is almost always a technical problem calling for the special knowledge of the scholar. It may be of service, however, to indicate the larger areas in the New Testament illuminated by a general understanding of Judaism.

I. *The Synoptic Gospels and the Acts*

It will not be necessary to point out again the more apparent evidences of Jewish influence in the Synoptic Gospels. The institutions, the religious practices, and

the religious ideas with which the Synoptics deal are mainly Jewish as regards their historic background. In other words the uniqueness of Jesus and the originality of his teaching are to be determined with reference to this background. His teaching has appealed to non-Jews throughout the centuries, but not because it was cast in the form of any non-Jewish culture. Modern Jewish scholars stress the Jewish character of Jesus's teaching both in its form and content. On the other hand, Dean Inge insists that it is not possible " to call the Gospel Jewish, except with many qualifications ". But even he admits that " no Hellenic influence can be traced in it (i.e. the teaching of Jesus) ; there is not even any sign of the Hellenized Judaism which for us is represented by his contemporary Philo ".[1] We may safely conclude that the teaching of Jesus has Judaism as its background. It has been argued that the tradition has been influenced by non-Jewish ideas at three points : in a few passages suggesting a " mystical " element in Jesus's teaching (especially Matt. xi, 27) ; in the alleged asceticism of certain recorded sayings ; and in the sacramental tendency of Luke's account of the Supper (xxii, 19, 20 ; cf. 1 Cor. xi, 23–5). All three are highly technical matters, and those who argue for Hellenistic influences at these points usually contend that these influences have operated to alter the original tradition.

As we might expect, it is at the point of interpretation of Jesus's uniqueness rather than in his recorded sayings that we are to look for non-Jewish ideas. The nativity stories in Matthew and Luke, the

[1] Chapter on Religion in *The Legacy of Greece*, edited by Livingstone, p. 41.

emphasis, especially in Mark, upon the Death and the Cross, and other ways of interpreting the meaning of his Person, have been attributed to Hellenistic influences. These, again, raise highly involved and controversial questions which do not invalidate the position that in the main the Synoptics depend upon Judaism, and especially upon the Jewish Scriptures, for the forms which they use to establish the uniqueness of Jesus's Person. We should perhaps add that the hypothesis of a mythical Christ, the creation of a Christ-cult, has been held to account for the entire literature and the community producing it. Even those scholars who accept this hypothesis, and they are few in number, would admit that the substance of the material taken up into the Christ-cult is Jewish in character.

Of the Synoptics, Matthew seems the most Jewish because of the strongly Jewish character of some of its passages. But this excessive Jewish colouring probably belongs to the sources used by the evangelist rather than to the writer himself.[1]

It is now generally recognized that Acts should be considered in connection with the Gospel of Luke of which it is the continuation. The two writings were quite possibly issued at about the same time and as a two-volume work.[2] " The real theme (of Acts) is . . . the expansion of Christianity through the energy of the Spirit." [3] The author shows us the little community of Christians in Jerusalem, at first in close association with the parent religion, and then breaking with Judaism and spreading in a miraculous way to the

[1] Cf. Taylor, *The Gospels*, p. 33 f. and p. 76 f.
[2] Cf. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts*.
[3] E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 95.

larger world. Opposition to the new religion comes from the Jews, who have failed to see that Jesus is the predicted Messiah, and Christianity is presented as politically harmless from the Roman viewpoint.

The theology of Acts is, in the main, primitive and Jewish in character. The speeches of Peter and Stephen in the early chapters reveal no developed ideas. They conceive the new faith as based on the resurrection of Christ, predicted in the Jewish Scriptures, and followed by the outpouring of the Spirit. Reflections on the significance of the death of Christ are restrained, and the fact of the resurrection and of the gift of the Spirit is emphasized. Moreover the Spirit is understood in the Jewish sense of a power possessing men and enabling them to do mighty works, rather than in the Johannine or Pauline sense of the Spirit as the very basis of a new kind of humanity. Even when Paul comes on the stage as the hero of the book, it is the universality of the gospel message and the power of the Spirit in its triumphant spread, rather than the distinctive Pauline doctrines, that characterize the writing.

II. *The Epistles of Paul*

That Paul should present the Gospel as over against Judaism was both natural, because of his own personal history, and inevitable, because of the character of the attacks made upon him and his message. His more important letters cannot be understood without a knowledge of the Jewish religion. Yet we must not accept in a too naïve fashion the Jewish background as explaining Paul. We have to remember that Paul " was, in fact, not writing to convince Jews

but to keep his Gentile converts from being convinced by Jewish propagandists, who insisted that faith in Christ was not sufficient to salvation apart from observance of the law." [1] We must remember also that Paul's interpretation of Judaism would hardly be more acceptable to Jews then or now than would his presentation of Christianity so closely related to it. Judaism, assuredly, is the major influence in Paul's background, but we must be open-minded to the suggestion that his Judaism has been universalized and treated metaphysically as a result of influences from the Hellenistic world.

For the purposes of this brief survey, we shall treat the thirteen epistles coming down to us under Paul's name without raising the complex critical questions as to authorship, date, and integrity.

Paul's correspondence with the church at Thessalonica deals with the moral implications of the new faith and with a single theological issue, also of practical significance, i.e. his teaching about the return of Christ. In 2 Thessalonians this teaching occupies the central place (ii, 1–12) and is cast in the terminology of Jewish apocalyptic not elsewhere used by Paul, thus raising in the opinion of many scholars the question of the authenticity of this epistle.

1 Corinthians is of primary importance as revealing the life and practice of an early Christian church, and as contributing the earliest written information we possess about the Last Supper and the Resurrection (xi, 23–7 and xv, 1–7). The account of the Supper should be compared with Luke's record, on the one hand, and with the Mark-Matthew record, on the

[1] Moore, *Judaism*, vol. iii, Notes, p. 150 f.

other, with the question in mind as to whether a non-Jewish sacramental tendency is to be observed.[1] In the great chapter on immortality Paul takes his stand, or perhaps his point of departure from the Pharisaic position, holding to a resurrection of the body but rejecting the cruder form of this faith by insisting upon the "spiritual" nature of this body. The practical problems dealt with in this letter show us a Paul who has taken up into his teaching the noble features of the Jewish ethic under a Christian motivation, strongly conditioned by the approaching end of the age. 2 Corinthians, as it has come down to us, contains two distinct parts, a passionate personal defence called forth by the activities of enemies who represent an extreme Jewish Christian position (chapters 10–13), and an equally impassioned tenderness of gratitude and thanksgiving (chapters 1–9). Especially important for Paul's Christology is v, 16, 17, which is held by many scholars to be evidence of a non-Jewish speculative tendency.

Galatians and Romans are our chief sources for Paul's theology. In Galatians Paul deals with two issues, closely related : an attack upon himself and upon his gospel. The attempt to impose Jewish customs upon his Gentile converts arouses him to a vehement declaration that salvation is by faith alone, and to the classic interpretation of the place of the Promise and the Law in the Divine plan, the Law being both temporary and negative in character. The Spirit is not conceived in the narrower Jewish sense of an invading energy enabling men to do extraordinary deeds, but as the creative power in the production of a new humanity and as the source of ethical fruits. In his discussion of the new freedom Paul seems to

[1] Cf. Macgregor, *Eucharistic Origins*, pp. 56 ff., 159 ff.

attack the position of some, who held that the Spirit lifted men above ethical standards, by insisting that the Gospel has really substituted for the old, external control of the Law the inner power of the spirit. Yet this epistle, so emphatic in its rejection of the Law, betrays a Paul who was not able to shake off "the habits of thought which the study of the Law had ingrained in him".[1] The form his argument takes is determined by the Old Testament passages used, and to some extent by rabbinic methods of interpretation. While the cosmic significance of Christ is not here developed as in Colossians and Ephesians, the foundations for that development are clearly laid.

Romans offers a less controversial and personal, a more closely reasoned treatment of the same theme, the Law-free Gospel. While the Promise and the Law are still the terms Paul uses, he universalizes the implications of his argument and develops especially his view of man, and the significance of the death of Christ in relation to the nature of man, who is everywhere powerless to attain salvation by his works. In this epistle, for reasons not easy to understand, he also treats at length (chapters 9–11) of the future destiny of the Jews. That Paul could not contemplate the final refusal of the Jews to accept the Gospel shows at once how closely his thought of the new faith was connected with the old, and how deeply he was bound by ties of affection to the religion of his fathers.

The Prison Epistles reveal less of the distinctly Jewish background. In Colossians and Ephesians the heresy combated is apparently that of recognizing cosmic powers as worthy of worship along with Christ. Whatever of Judaism there may have been in this

[1] Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 152.

tendency was no doubt diluted by alien speculation. The author answers by assigning cosmic and all-inclusive values to Christ in language reminding us of the christology of Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel (Col. i, 15–17). In Ephesians we have the added idea of the Church, in which Jew and Gentile are to be brought together under the headship of the cosmic Christ. Philippians, in addition to its personal references and the important christological passage (ii, 5–11), which certainly does not remind us of normative Judaism, deals with hostile teachers who may have represented some Jewish tendency.

The Pastoral Epistles represent a different stage in the development of the early church when, no doubt as the consequence of conflicts with heresy, sound doctrine and the organization of church government and life begin to play an important rôle. The conflict with Judaism as such is past history, and the influence of the older religion is no longer direct. The church is threatened by other forms of thought than the purely Jewish.

III. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*

Hebrews is the most Jewish in form and in the nature of its contents of the New Testament writings. The theme of the epistle is the finality of Christianity as shown in the priesthood of Christ in the true, heavenly tabernacle. The readers are exhorted to be loyal to this priest, in whom the earthly system has its final meaning, and through whom the faithful draw near to God by the new and living way he has opened for them. His death and ascension—the resurrection as such plays no rôle in Hebrews—are interpreted

by analogy from the sacrificial system of Judaism and especially the entrance of the high priest into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. Each step in the carefully developed argument is substantiated by Old Testament passages typologically and allegorically interpreted. Resemblances to the sort of Hellenistic Judaism developed by Philo are striking in this epistle.

Yet Hebrews is not a polemic against Judaism as a rival to Christianity, in the Pauline sense. Nearer to Judaism in form, it is actually more remote in fact than the earlier New Testament writings. The author can dismiss the religion of the Law in a single terse sentence as making " nothing perfect " (vii, 19). In fact this epistle is not a polemic at all ; it is a presentation of Christianity as the final and absolute religion on the background of the incomplete and imperfect religion of Judaism. He uses Judaism, one feels, because it is the religion familiar to himself and to his readers, in order to develop his philosophy of religion and the culminating place of Christianity therein.

IV. *The Epistle of James*

Judaism forms the background of James in a very different way from Hebrews. Whereas the Christology of Hebrews is the very centre of the author's treatment of Judaism, James offers no Christology at all, indeed only mentions the name of Christ twice, and then quite incidentally. Some have held that this epistle is a Jewish tract worked over into a Christian writing. Its presence in the New Testament, however, and the fact that so little Christian theology is

introduced, militate against this theory. Here again we have a type of mind in the early Christian community essentially different from the Pauline and Johannine. The epistle of James is mainly a forthright presentation of moral teachings, wholesome and practical in character. It reminds us of Jewish moral maxims and at the same time of sayings in the Synoptic Gospels.

V. 1 *Peter*, *Jude*, *and* 2 *Peter*

The problems connected with the authorship, date, and literary relationships of these writings lie beyond the scope of our study. 1 Peter is a moving and beautiful presentation of the motives that should characterize the Christian under persecution. Unlike Hebrews and Revelation, which deal with persecution situations by a christological argument, in the one case, and by an apocalyptic argument in the other, 1 Peter is strongly ethical in tone. Hope is the watchword of the epistle, but the Christian's hope, based on "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead", and fixed on "the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (i, 3–5), is not strongly coloured by Jewish apocalyptic thought. Direct relations with Judaism seem indicated by the address of the epistle "to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion" (i, 1). But that the readers were in the main Gentiles seems evident from a number of passages (cf. i, 14; ii, 9, 10; iv, 3, 4), and the Babylon of v, 13 is generally thought to be a figure for Rome. It is Christians, regardless of the racial background, who are reckoned as the true Israel. The famous passage on the descent of Christ to the world of the dead and his ministry to them (iii, 19 ff.), unique in the New Testament,

has no close parallel in Jewish literature, although Judaism taught an opportunity offered to the Gentiles for repentance before the final judgment.[1]

The brief epistle of Jude is occupied entirely with a denunciation of false teachers and teaching. Its main point of interest for us is the use by a Christian writer of Jewish apocalyptic books as authoritative (cf. vss. 6, 9, 14, 15). Such use no doubt added to the prejudice against these writings in Judaism and led to the final rejection of the apocalypses as heretical. The type of heresy combated in Jude is Gnostic.

2 Peter deals with the same false teaching denounced in Jude and, in part, in identical language. The one important addition in this epistle is the defence of the primitive hope in the Lord's return against influences tending to dilute or even to deny it (cf. iii, 1–13). In some quarters, then, the strongly apocalyptic type of Christian hope was beginning to die out.

VI. *The Johannine Writings*

Of the five New Testament writings that come down to us under the name John, one, the Book of Revelation, is so different in character from the others, and so closely related to Jewish apocalyptic thought, as to merit separate treatment apart from the question of authorship.

The Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles constitute a major problem in New Testament criticism, having to do not alone with the identity of the author

[1] Cf. Moore, *Judaism*, vol. ii, index, under "Gentiles".

but in connection therewith with the relation of these writings to the Synoptic tradition, on the one hand, and to the Hellenistic thought-world on the other. Our attention must be confined to relationships with the Jewish background. The discovery that these writings interpret the life and teaching of Jesus for the larger world is apt to obscure the important and indeed organic connection they bear to the Jewish faith.

The author was a Jew and perhaps originally a Palestinian Jew. His knowledge of the geography of Palestine and "the cast both of his thought and his language" point in this direction, although he was steeped in Greek culture.[1] The Johannine writings come from the Hellenistic church, and there are many signs of the complete separation of the Christian movement from Judaism and its full identification as an independent religion in the Gentile world. It is not strange, accordingly, that many have reckoned the Johannine writings as belonging wholly to the new Hellenistic milieu of Christianity. Yet so careful a scholar as Professor E. F. Scott can write that the author was "well acquainted with Jewish ideas and customs and (was) faithful to the Jewish outlook, even when thinking and writing as a Hellenist".[2] And again, "the Fourth Evangelist writes for that later time in which so many new interests had arisen and the mode of conceiving the Christian message had so radically changed. It has commonly been held that this work was that of an innovator, that he took the Apostolic teaching as it had hitherto been understood and boldly transformed it into something entirely different.

[1] Macgregor, *The Gospel of John*, Introd., p. lxiv.
[2] *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 232.

There is truth in this view, in so far as he belonged to his own age and was in sympathy with its new outlook. But he was much more a conservative than an innovator. He saw that Christianity, under the later influences, was in danger of losing itself in mystical and philosophical speculation, and his aim was to anchor it again to the primitive tradition. That is why his work takes the form of a Gospel, a record of the life of Christ." [1] That he conceives the significance of Jesus's life and teaching under the Logos idea shows him to be a Hellenist ; that he uses the Logos to interpret the significance of an historic figure shows that he had not abandoned the primitive tradition ; and that he wrote a Gospel, and not just a speculative treatise, proves the influence not only of the primitive tradition but also of the Jewish background with its emphasis upon an historic revelation.

The first epistle of John must also be reckoned with in interpreting the Gospel, whether it preceded or followed it, for its strong ethical emphasis is significant as throwing light upon the latter. Jesus's teaching of love to the brethren is set forth in both as a new commandment, but its practical import is stressed in the first epistle as if to make certain that love is not to be evaporated into a merely mystical teaching. Here, again, Judaism is not the direct influence, of course, but the sturdy Jewish realism is the soil from which both the Synoptic tradition and the ethical emphasis of the Johannine thought have sprung.

At one point, i.e. apocalyptic, the break with Jewish ideas seems complete. The Fourth Gospel substitutes for the return of the Lord in Messianic glory on the

[1] *The Literature of the New Testament*, pp. 249, 250.

clouds of heaven, the Coming of the Christ as an inward presence, already experienced by the believer (xiv, 18 f.). The first epistle of John seems not to have abandoned the more primitive belief so completely (cf. 1 John ii, 28), but the emphasis is the same.

VII. *The Book of Revelation*

Jewish apocalyptic ideas played an important rôle in the primitive church, and have continued to be influential throughout the Christian centuries. It is therefore a practical as well as a critical necessity to recognize the peculiar form of this type of literature and thought as earlier than the Christian convictions expressed through it. The form shaped and limited the Christian hope as well as gave it expression. Christians prized the Jewish apocalypses, and they have come down to us because they were preserved by Christians rather than by Jews. The popularity of this form of literature is further attested by the fact that Christians produced apocalypses of their own, one of which, the Revelation, was included in the canon and gave its Greek name Apocalypse to the entire literature.

The Book of Revelation has puzzled its readers from early times and continues to be an enigma, not because it is so difficult to understand the main movement of its thought, but because of the problem of its literary relationships. Scholars are pretty well agreed that it was written toward the close of the first century, in a time of persecution arising from the enforcement of Cæsar-worship in Asia Minor, with the purpose of encouraging Christians to stand fast. The motive for loyalty was the imminence of the

downfall of Rome and of the demoniacal powers behind it, and the coming of Christ in a cosmic triumph. The writer makes it explicit that these events are at hand (i, 1 ; xxii, 10), and his writing can only be interpreted as intended for succeeding centuries by disregarding his own plain words. The literary problem is, however, more difficult. What are the sources of the elaborate imagery ? The analysis of the book as it stands is admittedly difficult, and elaborate rearrangements have been proposed, as well as many suggestions regarding the sources of the imagery.

As the book stands it is " in its own way Christian through and through ". Christ is to be the central figure in the cosmic drama ; his death is also of central importance, and the name assigned to him, " the Lamb," is always reminiscent of that death ; loyalty to the church and patience until Christ's coming are the principal virtues enjoined. We have to remember that in the Jewish apocalypses the Messiah plays no such exclusive rôle. The " unchristian " features of the book, i.e. the conception of God in terms of an Oriental King and of Christ as solely the champion of the church, of salvation apart from any emphasis upon faith, and of conduct apart from the characteristic Christian virtues of love and forgiveness, may be due in part to the concrete persecution situation addressed, and in part to the inadequate Christianity of the writer.

VIII. *The Originality of the New Testament*

The historical relations between Christianity and the Judaism within which it began and from which it issued have assumed fresh importance from modern

studies in the field of Judaism. Normative Judaism, the Judaism persisting through and beyond the first century, must be reckoned with at every point. This normative Judaism stressed the importance of the individual, to use a single illustration, in its own way almost as strongly as did Hellenism. Characteristic Hellenistic terms such as the Logos have their parallels, and so far as the New Testament is concerned perhaps their roots, in the Jewish Wisdom Literature, as well as in Platonism and Stoicism. Thinking was not more isolated and circumscribed in the first century than in other similar transition periods. We are not yet in a position to define with exactness the Judaism forming the background of the New Testament, but our position has been that Judaism itself was in flux in the first century. If apocalyptic ideas were more obviously influential than the type of thought later to emerge as orthodox Judaism, still the more sedate and less speculative thinking and practice formed an essential part of the New Testament background. Thus the problem of the originality of the New Testament becomes more complex and intricate as we know more of the background from which it emerged.

We stand in need of a new definition of originality in the field of thought. "The new in the history of ideas is never wholly new, nor the old wholly old."[1] Christianity did emerge from Judaism as an independent religion, and it did maintain its independence in the larger Hellenistic world. Even if its success be reckoned as due to its unique power to gather to itself various ideas and religious practices, this very

[1] Porter, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. xlviii, 1929, p. 2, "The Problem of Things New and Old in the Beginnings of Christianity."

success remains a fact to be accounted for. To account for it by the view that history knows only the conditioned reactions of men to their environment is as definitely a philosophical judgment as to interpret Christianity as a divine movement in history ; both judgments move beyond the mere facts to an evaluation of them, and the former has no more validity as a judgment than has the latter.

The New Testament itself has a single and simple answer to give to the query as to its originality : the fact of Christ. Klausner maintains that " throughout the Gospels there is not one item of ethical teaching which cannot be paralleled either in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, or the Talmudic and Midrashic literature of the period near to Jesus ". Similarly it has been argued that Jesus's outlook on the future is steeped in apocalyptic thought ; or that Jesus himself was faithful to Judaism and never contemplated a break with the ancient faith ; or that every step in the development of the New Testament is understandable in the light of Philonic, Stoic, and other types of Jewish and Hellenistic thought and practice. But even if the most extreme claims be allowed, it still remains to explain why these steps were taken. We are driven back upon the mystery of personality, and the New Testament itself claims to be the result of one personality, the Christ.

There is no standardized presentation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, but it can be shown that whatever is unique is credited throughout its pages to the God who has revealed Himself in Christ. If we are asked, Which Christ are you thinking of, the Jesus of the Synoptics, the Lord of Paul, the Great High Priest of Hebrews, or the Logos of John ?

we may well answer that the richness and variety of presentation must not be allowed to obscure the essential unity of the New Testament portrait of Christ. In every New Testament book Christ is not less than the historic revelation of God, even where his cosmic or experiential value is most strongly stressed. And everywhere the ethical consequences of faith in him are pointed out. His teaching, even if closely approximating current Jewish teaching, was nevertheless a selection from it and is informed with a unique power and spirit. The speculative thinking of Philo or of the Mystery Religions is no doubt caught up into the Christian movement, but never as a mere system of ideas, always as centred in a person. The ethical teaching of Stoicism is a discernible influence in later New Testament writings, but the Christian ethic was never wholly divorced from faith in Christ and the God he revealed. To be sure, the very Christology of the New Testament can be shown to be powerfully influenced by various types of speculative thought, yet the necessity for using these modes of thought roots back in the fact of Christ.

The New Testament claim for originality remains the simplest and best attested historically. It was the fact of Christ which produced the Christian Church and the writings emanating from that Church as our New Testament.

PART II

HELLENISM

CHRISTIANITY AND THE GREEK POINT OF VIEW

I. *Christianity and Pagan Culture*

Judaism was the mother of Christianity and to her the daughter religion owed incomparably more than to any other influence. For long this truth remained unquestioned, and it is only with the present century that scholars, in their eagerness to do justice to other formative factors previously neglected, have been tempted to picture early Gentile Christianity, divorced it is alleged from its Jewish antecedents, as a religion of a purely Hellenistic type. The falsity of any such theory hardly needs demonstration. Yet even though it be true that Jesus was a Jew, that His missionaries, even when drawn from a Hellenistic environment, were men of Jewish blood and education, that the Christian Church found its Bible in the Old Testament and in the Synagogue the pattern for its worship, that the Christian community appeared in its own eyes as a New Israel and in the eyes of the world as a mere heretical Jewish sect—nevertheless there is real force in the words of Harnack : " There is hardly any fact which deserves to be turned over and thought over so much as this, that the religion of Jesus has never been able to root itself in Jewish or . . . upon Semitic soil. Certainly there must have been, and certainly there must be still, some element in

this religion which is allied to the greater freedom of of the Greek spirit." [1]

Even the Judaism of which Christianity was born was itself a highly composite religion, and had shown itself hospitable, however grudgingly, to influences from every quarter of the ancient world. Palestine, by virtue of its position on the map, had for centuries been the clearing-house of cultural and religious commerce, as is shown by the strenuous but not always successful efforts of the prophets to preserve the national religion from outside contamination. In later ages the process became more pronounced. The permeation of Greek civilization through the East following on Alexander's conquests affected the Jews like all other races ; and though the movement was checked by the Maccabean war, it was only after a Hellenistic strand had been wrought into the warp and woof of Judaism. This mixed lineage of the parent religion must never be ignored when we are tracing the early history of its offspring.

Thus, though lineally descended from the religion of the Old Testament, Christianity cannot disown her composite ancestry. Reaction from the older point of view, according to which Christianity is purely the outcome of Jesus's own teaching on Palestinian soil, has led some scholars to regard it as a mere syncretistic product of the age in which it arose, what Newman has called " a congeries, a hotch-potch of the leavings and scraps and broken meat of the great peoples of the East and West ".[2] While disallowing such extremes one may agree in part at least with Pfleiderer that " Jewish prophecy,

[1] Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, i, p. 74.
[2] Newman, *Callista*, p. 275.

rabbinical teaching, Oriental gnosis, and Greek philosophy had already mingled their colours upon the palette from which the portrait of Christ in the New Testament Scriptures was painted." [1] Of the non-Jewish influences which went to the moulding of Christianity, those which fall under the general term "Hellenistic" must be reckoned as the chief.

The intimate association of Hellenistic culture with paganism has long tempted conservative scholars to depreciate its influence as a formative factor in Christianity. The religion of Christ has been regarded as something wholly new, except in so far as it has its roots in the Old Testament, and in absolute antithesis to the pagan world in which it so rapidly propagated itself. Such a view is as false as the opposite extreme, which would hold that Christianity is simply the fortuitous concourse of religious atoms already at hand without the intervention of any divine Providence. The same Providence who purposed the harvest also prepared the field, and we can never understand the growth of the Gospel unless we know something of the nature of the soil. One hopes that the day is over when one sought to understand Christianity by deliberately setting side by side the worst side of paganism and the best of Christianity, by contrasting the bestialities of a Petronius with the spiritual genius of a John. Modern scholarship will evaluate our religion by scrutinizing it not merely in contrast but also in contact with its environment.

It is not only in modern times that one finds a twofold estimate of the relation of Hellenism to Christianity, on the one hand that its influence is wholly harmful, on the other that the relation is one

[1] Pfleiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ*, p. 9.

of mutual advantage. This double estimate is also characteristic of much early Christian literature, where Hellenism is now banned and now blessed. To the earliest believers "the wisdom of this æon" was wholly suspect, and all Hellenistic religion was rank heathenism, not only worthless but positively pernicious. The pagan was either a blind fool bowing down to stocks and stones, to idols which were "nothing in the world" (1 Cor. viii, 4); or else those "gods", if indeed existence they had, were devils. At their best the pagan philosophers were plagiarists who had borrowed or stolen their doctrines from the Scriptures, while the Mysteries were devil-inspired parodies of the Christian sacraments.[1] Quite otherwise the Greek Apologists of the second century, according to whom the seeds of truth which came to fruit in the Gospel were already contained in Hellenistic culture. Clement of Alexandria protests against those who would attribute the rise of Greek philosophy to the devil, for "man has been born chiefly for the knowledge of God", so that philosophy was divinely purposed to be to the Greeks that *praeparatio evangelica* which the Law had been to Israel.[2] Though Christianity alone is "the genuinely true philosophy", yet even "the barbarian and Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth . . . from the theology of the ever-living Word".[3]

An interesting illustration of this cleavage of opinion may be had in a comparison of the views of Tertullian and Origen, representatives respectively of the Latin and Greek traditions. Origen, himself brought to Christ through Greek philosophy, hears

[1] Justin, *Apol.*, i, 66.
[2] *Strom.*, vi, 17.
[3] *Strom.*, i, 13.

in the philosopher's voice the call to conversion from the world to God, and urges his pupil Gregory Thaumaturgus to devote himself to Greek philosophy as a preparatory study for Christian truth. To Tertullian, philosophy is the " mother of all heresy ". " What has Athens to do with Jerusalem ? What agreement between the Academy and the Church ? " [1] Origen's generous spirit would count those who before Christ had " lived with the Logos " as Christians in all but the name ; while Tertullian arrogantly declares that even Socrates' guardian Demon " doubtless distorted his mind from the Good ".[2] Alas that for so long we find in the ascendant, not the tolerance and liberal catholicity of the great Alexandrian martyr-philosopher, but the vindictive intolerance of the African, who even at his martyrdom looked for not the least part of his future reward in the contemplation of the exquisite tortures in hell of his pagan persecutors.[3] Yet the splendid catholic spirit inherited from Greek liberalism re-emerges here and there in unexpected places : thus Augustine, for whom in general the " virtues of the ancients " are nothing but " pagan vices ", can yet in his Confession (iii, 4) acknowledge of a lost book of the pagan Cicero that it " changed my whole disposition and directed my prayers to Thyself, O God, and it transmuted my desires and wishes. Suddenly every vain hope lost its charm for me, and with an incredible warmth of heart I began to yearn for the immortality of wisdom, and I began to arise to return to Thee ". Thus was Augustine, like Jerome before him, " enraptured by the grace and beauty of profane wisdom." [4]

[1] *De Praesc.*, vii.
[2] *Apol.*, xxii.
[3] *De Spect.*, xxx.
[4] *Ep.*, lxxiii.

Christianity, though an Oriental religion, has found its strength in the West; and if it has proved the most successful fusing power between East and West, it is largely because it fell heir at its birth to so rich a heritage of tradition, associations, and ideas drawn from an infinite variety of sources. Into the Gospel stream flowed tributaries from every quarter. The new faith profited by the monotheistic propaganda both of Jewish prophetism and of Greek philosophy. If there lay ready to its hand, as its legacy from Judaism, a *corpus* of divine revelation of hoary antiquity and undisputed authority, there also awaited its message a pagan world sensitized to the mysticism of redemption by the suggestive symbolism of the Mysteries, and tutored in the rudiments of a sane ethic by the Stoa and of a rational philosophy of religion by Plato and his disciples. In Origen's words,[1] a "gentler spirit" had entered the world. Above all, in the Greek *Koine* the Gospel discovered ready to hand a universal world-language, a fit vehicle for its written message and the key for its missionaries to every door. And thereby it linked its destiny irrevocably with the spirit of Hellenism which had already contributed so much to the preparation of the world for its birth. Just how great was that contribution it will be our aim to explore.

II. *What is "Hellenism"?*

Our first task is one of definition. What is "Hellenism"? The word has by common usage come to be accepted as the substantive form of the

[1] *Contra Celsum*, ii, 30.

adjective "Hellenistic", in place of the more correct but quite impossible "Hellenisticism", and it is in this wider sense that it is used in these pages. To put it otherwise, "Hellenism" is to be defined, not narrowly as Grote uses it in his history, denoting the classic culture of Athens, nor even as "the continuation of the pure line of the older Greek civilization", but in the broader sense of—"the civilization of the three centuries during which Greek culture radiated far from the homeland,"[1] though naturally many of the characteristic features of that civilization were a legacy from the classic age.

Under such a wide definition of Hellenism we are even justified in including much of the contemporary civilization of the later Roman Republic. For during the expansion of their *imperium* the Romans deliberately left unimpaired most of the characteristic culture and institutions of the component parts of the Empire, so that, though the peoples of the West became ultimately more Roman than Rome herself, the East still remained essentially Hellenistic. It might indeed be argued that Rome's chief mission was to preserve Alexander's achievements, and even to round them off. This is particularly true of the work of Pompey, who leaves the impression of having almost consciously worn the mantle of Alexander.[2] Indeed, Rome never ceased to be aware that she was heir to the legacy of Greece. Though she might impose upon the world her laws and institutions and her genius for political government, the vital forces of culture even within her own empire always remained

[1] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[2] On this point see H. T. F. Duckworth in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i, proleg. i, pp. 172, 184, 192.

Hellenistic. In literature, art, philosophy, Rome was imitator and slave to the great Masters of Hellas, while even the chief Roman gods were Greek deities translated from Olympus and domiciled on the Capitoline Hill. It is, of course, important to remember that as Rome expanded towards the East the Greek influences to which she became subject were not those of classical Greece, but of the more seductive and accommodating modification of Greek civilization which we call in general "Hellenistic". (But with this safeguard the term "Hellenism" may be justifiably expanded to include "Græco-Roman" culture in general during the centuries which we have surveyed.)

Perhaps Mahaffy's definition is as good as any: "(By 'Hellenism' I mean that so-called 'silver-age' of Greek art and literature when they have become cosmopolitan and not parochial; and by 'Hellenistic' not only what *was* Greek, but what desired and assumed to be Greek, from the highest and noblest imitation down to the poorest travesty.")[1] Thus regarded Hellenism becomes a question, as Isocrates put it, "not of blood but of thought"—*οὐ τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας*.[2] To be a "Hellenist" implies not a special racial descent, but a certain spirit or bent of mind. To define this "Greek point of view" is now our task. We shall discuss six outstanding features, and it may be well to mark from the first the weakness of the *ethical* from whatever angle we view Greek character.

[1] Mahaffy, *Progress of Hellenism in Alexander's Empire*, p. 4.
[2] Isocrates, *Panegyric*, 13.

III. *The Greek Point of View*

(*a*) *Individualism*

First, Hellenism may be said to be characterized by *Individualism*. Plato gives us the idea that not only a nation's prosperity, but actually its character, depends upon its form of government, and Greek political institutions certainly tended to foster the championship of the rights of the individual community or city-state against the nation and the race, and the rights of the individual himself against the majority of his fellow-citizens. Even the typical Greek city-state was but the expression of a civic individualism, with the city instead of the citizen for the unit. (As for the apparent socialism of the philosophers, "the state was to them only the means, though the only means, to individual perfection".[1]) Hellenism was always the champion of "self-determination" both for city and individual, the result being in the political world a chaos of petty nationalisms, and for the individual the claim to unbridled freedom in speech, thought, and conduct without let or hindrance on the part of the state. It may be true, as Simonides puts it in a well-known fragment, that "the city trains the man", but for the Greek the city's chief asset is the individual citizen. The idea throbs through the whole of Pericles' great Funeral Oration that the state can prosper only when the individual brings his own free intelligence, judgment, and service to her enrichment. The development of Greek philosophy was along the same lines. *Γνῶθι σεαυτόν* "know thyself," is the first maxim, the reflection of the

[1] Maurice Hutton, *The Greek Point of View*, p. 104.

individual upon his own inner life the first duty of the would-be philosopher. Though Socrates and Plato make heroic efforts to buttress the state by subordinating the individual to the universal, the reaction comes again with Aristotle, while the post-Aristotelian schools are frankly individualistic, and Greek sophistic in general reduces society to atoms by making man, the individual, the measure of all things.

Paradoxically, with the decay of the separatist city-state after Alexander this Greek trait of individualism becomes even more accentuated. (For individualism is after all but the reverse side, the necessary corollary, of universalism, and in the wider world of the great Hellenistic empires the citizen, no longer an important unit in a small city community, was apt to find his worth and significance more and more in his own personality.) No longer was he valued by himself and others according to the rank assigned to him in the body-politic, but by his own qualities, capacity, and individual record. Thus, whatever his position and vocation in life, the new cosmopolitan Greek had the same outlook as the typical contemporary man of letters well described by W. S. Ferguson, "for whom his own city no longer sufficed," and who "was allowed to feel that he had only his own taste to consult, his own moods to chronicle, his own personality to embody in his work".[1] (Such individualism then as now was fraught with vast possibilities of evil—chaos and incoherence in the social outlook, a personal life organized with a view to self-culture and self-expression and withdrawn from the law of self-sacrifice;) yet it played no small part in preparing the

[1] Ferguson, *Greek Imperialism*, p. 4.

world for the Gospel of Him who said, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose *himself*?"

(*b*) *Humanism.*

Second, and closely akin to this individualism, is Hellenistic *Humanism.* It is "Hellas the nurse of man complete as man" who gave to the world the high ideal of a full and "four-square" manhood. The character of her sons is more rounded and complete than that of any of their contemporaries, for she aimed at the development of the whole man, *totus teres atque rotundus*, and the pursuit of everything that is "proper to man". Consequently for the Hellenist, as for Protagoras, "man is the measure of all things"—even of his gods, who are nothing but glorified editions of the typical Greek man. "Many are the wondrous things," says Sophocles, "and none more wondrous than man." Hamlet speaks as a true Greek when he says, "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!"[1] In thus realizing the greatness and grandeur of human nature, and striving after the perfection and harmony of our whole being, the Greek still has a message for all the ages.

(*c*) *Intellectualism.*

A third and perhaps the most significant feature of Greek culture is its *Intellectualism.* The Greek is the first to assert the inalienable right of man's

[1] Act II, Scene 2.

" meddling intellect ". He is always asking questions, and though often we may not agree with his answers, he has done us the priceless service of teaching us that there is no question which it is wrong for man to ask : there is no holy of holies into which man's reason may not penetrate, for even God, who has made man such that for him, as Plato puts it, " the unexamined life is not livable," must ultimately explain Himself.[1] Moreover the Greek not only asked questions ; with his genius for subtle language he invented for us instruments of precise thinking, terms to use in the seeking out of truth, and still more terms to contain the truths discovered ; and herein he has made Christian Theology for ever his debtor.

Yet such rationalism is inevitably fraught with danger, and the Greek with his conviction that reason holds the key to the universe has none of the Hebrew's sense for a *moral* order in the world. To Hellas, says Herodotus,[2] " Virtue has been an importation imported by wisdom "—and this preponderance of the intellect and minimizing of the will in Hellenistic

[1] This feature of Hellenism, wherein it is the true mother of all modern culture, is admirably summarized by Edwyn Bevan : " Perhaps the best way would be to speak of this type of culture as Rationalistic Civilization. That would describe it by an essential characteristic of its vital principle, and beg no questions as to its being confined to this or that set of people or quarter of the globe. What in the last resort gave its peculiar note to Hellenism as against all that existed outside it ? Surely just the singular development of those mental faculties, which we associate with rationalism, the critical intellect, the bent to submit traditions and belief to logical examination, the desire to get the values of things in their real proportions. It was because the Greeks could stand off from established custom, and ask the reason Why, that they could make progress." (E. Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*, p. 14 f.)

[2] vii, 102.

ethics is the very core of all that is most characteristic of our period. "Virtue is knowledge," says Plato again and again through the lips of Socrates, "and vice is ignorance." For the Christian self-examination results in conviction of sin: for Socrates it results in conviction of ignorance—for ignorance is the chiefest sin. "Ye must be born again ... of the Spirit," says Jesus, but it is *thought* which Plato describes as a second birth,[1] so that "conversion"[2] is for him predominantly intellectual and not moral. Most characteristic is Plato's teaching on "the lie in the soul". There is the lie upon the lips, a notoriously common Greek failing; but a man is in a much worse case if he harbours "a lie in his soul", that is if he is self-deceived and ignorant. A misstatement of fact through ignorance is ethically worse than an open-eyed falsification of the truth: the latter is a mere lie verbal, the former is a lie within the soul. One could hardly find a more piquant illustration of the contrast between Greek and Christian modes of thinking. Furthermore, if ignorance be the chief sin, the individual virtues become intellectualized. "Humility" or "modesty" (*σωφροσύνη*, *εὐβουλία*) is exalted in Greek literature above all the virtues, but it consists chiefly in an intelligent conviction that for weak mortal man to boast himself is simply not "common sense". How different from Paul's humility, which expresses itself in exact proportion to the growth of his *moral* aspirations and his actual attainment through grace in the good life (see Phil. iii, 7 ff.). Again a man should be merciful, not because God Himself is merciful, but

[1] Theaetetus, 149.

[2] *περιαγωγή*: see Rep. vii, chap. iv, 518.

because the same "common sense" teaches us that we ourselves will probably need mercy some day. "Do you bid me let the dead man be buried?" asks Agamemnon: "I do; for thereto shall I come myself".[1]

It is fascinating to trace how this intellectualism expresses itself in the Greek language. The word λόγος means "language", but it also means "reason". As early as Homer himself we constantly find mental words, implying the possession of knowledge, used to express will and character (e.g. αἴσιμα εἰδώς, by which Homer means, as we would say, "well-meaning," "good-hearted"). The word "virtue" (ἀρετή) itself often loses its ethical colouring, as when Thucydides[2] can speak of the unprincipled schemer Antiphon as "second to none in virtue" (ἀρετῇ οὐδενὸς ὕστερος), implying apparently "in intellectual ability". The use of χρηστός to mean "effective" as well as "good" shows a similar confusion of ethical content. The word διατριβή means etymologically a "pastime", but for the intellectual Greek such a pastime takes the form of an exercise in philosophy, so that this becomes the common usage of the word; and similarly σχολή is "leisure" and also "school". Finally when Plato wishes to say, as we would put it, "I love you with all my heart," he writes ἐξ ἅπαντος τοῦ νοῦ φιλῶ, "I love you with all my *mind*."[3] Could one find better expression of the Greek intellectual bent?[4]

[1] Sophocles, *Ajax*, 1364.
[2] viii, 68, 1.
[3] *Gorgias*, 510 c.
[4] See a most suggestive discussion by Hutton, *op. cit.*, chap. v.

(d) Beauty.

Fourthly we shall place the Greek's *love of beauty.* The word καλόν means not only the "beautiful" but also the "good", for it was under the form of beauty that Hellas worshipped goodness. Thus Quintilian can say of the Olympian Zeus by Phidias that "its beauty seemed to have added something to revealed religion". And the idea of beauty and grace (χάρις) was not reserved for the artistic masterpiece; the Greek sought to carry it into every sphere of common life. "We combine love of the beautiful with simplicity"—φιλοκαλοῦμεν μετ' εὐτελείας—says Pericles of the Athenian commonwealth,[1] while Plato's ideal citizen would play from childhood among beautiful things.[2] Having thus as it were discovered the essential relationship between beauty and reality, the Greek was apt to see the whole of life as an art, to be lived beautifully. The complete life therefore must be diversified, picturesque, even sensuous, and must be delivered at all costs from the dull and sordid and monotonous. This passion for joy and beauty, unequalled by any other race, is another priceless legacy from Greece; yet here again we are conscious of the ethical weakness. Life regarded as an art relies little upon the more austere virtues, upon patiently organized habits or moral forces generally. To be unbeautiful is a worse sin than to be unmoral. And here again language is an index to character. For the Roman and Anglo-Saxon, with their sterner morality, *sinister* (literally "left-handed") refers to character and means "evil-intentioned", "malicious"; but for the artistic races, the Greeks and the French, the corresponding

[1] Thuc., ii, 40. [2] *Rep.* viii, 558.

words σκαῖος, *gauche*, mean "clumsy", "awkward", and refer to an outward lack of art—straws showing which way the racial spirit blows.

(*e*) *Moderation.*

Fifthly we may mention the Greek's *love of moderation* in all things. In his eyes the supreme virtue was σωφροσύνη.[1] "Nothing too much" was his watchword. As Aristotle put it, everything ought to have beginning, middle, and end in the right proportion. The most heinous sin in the eyes of heaven is ὕβρις, that over-weening self-confidence which oversteps the limit set for man. In art and literature alike the true Greek spirit is reticent; it is only in its decadence that it becomes flamboyant. Witness the austerity of Phidias, and the almost provoking self-restraint of Thucydides as he tells of the tragedy of his country. And yet again language reflects character. It is no accident that the Greek, like the Scot, loves to express himself by the use of what he calls μείωσις or λιτότης, by an understatement of the truth, as if he has a misgiving that he may say more than he intends. Plato regularly says "not altogether" (οὐ πάνυ) when he means "altogether not" or "not at all", while he finds a thing "adequate" (ἱκανόν) rather than risk the word "full" or "great". Similarly he comforts the good man in his misfortunes by telling him that his outlook is "not bad".[2] It was this "moderatism" of the Greek that made him, so far as he was typically Greek (as e.g. Paul's

[1] "A moderation of perfect poise without exaggeration and without weakness" (Angus, *Religious Quests of the Græco-Roman World*, p. 2).

[2] *Rep.* x, 619b.

audience at Athens), so difficult a subject for evangelization ; he was too cautious and intellectually *blasé* to relish the enthusiasm of the Gospel ; he shared the proverbial distaste of all people of " culture " for evangelical religion ; to his sophisticated commonsense the preaching of the Cross was " foolishness ".

(*f*) *Naturalism.*

And yet there was another side to his genius which may seem in flat contradiction to that just discussed. Attention has often been directed to what is called the *naturalism* of the Greek, and with this we close our list. " Nature " (φύσις) is one of the great Greek words ; the ideal life of man is one in harmony with nature ; man, if he would express his true self, must live " conformably with nature "—for " nature so willed, who takes no heed of laws ".[1] And there is that in the Greek which suggests that, so far from being sophisticated, he is a child of nature who refuses to grow up. As Plato makes an Egyptian priest say to Solon, " No Hellene is ever old ; you are always young in your souls." [2] And being such the Greek was both instinct with a childish *joie de vivre* and also, by reason of his frankness and absence of prudery, appears at times as the *enfant terrible* of the ancient world. " The Greeks," says Heine, " were only handsome boys ; the Jews were men." And like boys they were always inquisitive, always posing questions, always, as Luke puts it, smiling at a good habit run to seed, " spending their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing " (Acts xvii, 21). As Dr. Glover

[1] Euripides, *frag.*

[2] *Timaeus*, 22b.

well says, Herodotus the father of Greek history illustrates the spirit of the typical Greek of all ages : " Some readers have found him simple and childish, but that is careless reading. It is the simplicity of the essentially truthful mind, the bright interest of the boy always awake for the real." [1] Was it not some such spirit that our Lord sought in the sons of the Kingdom who were to be " as little children " ?

The civilization built upon such characteristics was certain to be a strange amalgam of good and evil, and it is not difficult to find serious flaws in the Hellenistic type of culture. In particular we have had cause repeatedly to notice its weakness on the ethical side. Here the Greek's defects are the reverse side of his qualities. A humanist, he reduced even divine perfection to the measure of his own human frailties. A child of nature, his very *joie de vivre* tempted him to neglect the sterner virtues and to think lightly of the sins of the flesh. A lover of beauty, he was yet almost a complete stranger to the Hebrew ideal of " the beauty of holiness ". It is significant that there is missing from the Greek language any word adequately corresponding to the Hebrew idea of " sin " ; the Greek merely " erred " (ἁμαρτεῖν), in the sense of " missing the mark ", and completely lacked the consciousness of the ugliness of sin as an affront to an infinitely Holy God. An intellectualist, he thought it a less sin to be immoral than to be ignorant, and found the epitome of virtue in self-centred common sense. The Greek was an individualist, yet paradoxically his morals, such as they were, tended to be social rather than individual ; for the small separatist city-state, to which he looked back

[1] Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

for his ideals, could not hope to survive unless social virtues, such as patriotism, were held to cover a multitude of personal sins. The soldier, says Pericles,[1] must make up by sacrifice in battle for the misdemeanours of his private life. Moreover for the Greek the "social" was always apt to become confused with the "political",[2] and he was little concerned even with "social" morality as distinct from the "political" virtues befitting a good citizen or an effective statesman. Hence for Aristotle "Ethics" becomes but a branch of "Politics", and thereby becomes dangerously narrowed both on the individual and on the social side. The Christian would reverse the proposition and claim that Politics should be regarded as a branch of Ethics. Again Greek individualism too often expresses itself in sheer egotism. Thus even patriotism appears as little more than enlightened and calculating self-interest. It pays the individual citizen that his country should prosper, so that love and service of country is reduced to intelligent egotism. As the King declares in Sophocles's tragedy: "Ye shall find me too leagued with you in seeking vengeance for this land, and for the god besides . . . for in doing right to Laius, I serve myself."[3] How different Garibaldi: "Follow me for Italy's sake. I offer no glory or reward; I offer pain and want and death—for Italy's sake!" In a sense it is true that both Hellenism and Christianity find the basis of ethics in individualism—but in a very different type of individualism. For Hellenism it appears as egotism;

[1] Thuc., ii, 42, 4.

[2] Aristotle regularly uses the word *πολιτικός* where we would say "social".

[3] Sophocles, *Oed. Rex.*, 135 ff.

for the Christian it is the value of each individual in the eyes of God. Finally, worshipper as he is of "the golden mean", suspicious of all that savours of excess, the Greek has little of Jesus's enthusiasm and passion for great causes, no instinct that "a man's reach must exceed his grasp", no conviction that all the world is worth losing for the sake of one pearl of great price.

IV. *The Hellenistic Age*

To summarize briefly: the three centuries which in the wider world of Hellenism prepared the world for the New Testament are an age of levelling cosmopolitanism, when nationality is falling into the background and a common outlook and common speech are promoting a common culture in every quarter of "the inhabited world". The most diverse peoples are seen mingling in great cosmopolitan cities; race hatred is with few exceptions a thing of the past; the personality of the individual has room as never before to express itself; thought is free and unfettered as never again till modern times. The vision has emerged of an *œcumene*, the "universe of men", which is the common inheritance and possession of all civilized men. It is an age again of "syncretism", the fusion alike of peoples and of ideas, when, as the Apostle claimed in his own day, "the ends of the ages have met" (1 Cor. x, 11). All the streams which hitherto had flowed separately now converged into one composite culture where diverse social, philosophical and religious currents coursed through the corporate life of every community. In every sphere of thought assimilation, borrowing,

adaptation was the vogue—and the greatest of all borrowers and adapters were the Romans whose genius, it has been said, was "of a mosaic order". And nowhere was this process of fusion more conspicuous than in the sphere of religion. Greek, Roman, barbarian discovered that they worshipped the same God under different names, and attached each his own name to a cognate foreign deity. From this it was but a short step to the fusion of all deities, local and national, into universal powers, and thence to the belief, which gradually became more and more articulate, that all religions were ultimately one and destined to merge in one common faith. Meantime complete freedom of thought in matters religious was the order of the day; eclecticism is always the reverse side of syncretism; "cosmopolitanism in heaven was matched by religious individualism on earth."[1] Finally attention has often been called to many "modern" characteristics of the age. Perhaps we may here quote Tarn: "The resemblance of this world to our own is at first sight almost startling. There was the same complex of states, big and little, with different state-form, some more advanced than others, working within the bounds of a common civilization; and . . . there were many other phenomena which look very modern. Such are the eternal trouble of prices and wages; Socialism and Communism, the strike and the revolution; the growth of the ideas of humanity and brotherhood combined with savage quarrelling; the emancipation of woman and the restriction of population; questions of franchise and (possibly) representation, of emigration and the proletariat; exact learning and crass

[1] Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

superstition side by side . . . ; the spread of education, resulting in the manufacture of masses of the half-educated ; the more conscious emergence of propaganda ; the growth of all the half-worlds that cling to the skirts of science, of history, and of religion." As Dr. Glover says, it all " sounds horribly modern ".[1]

While Greek genius at its height was essentially original, the age with which we are dealing is rather a " popularizing " age, notable for breadth rather than depth, encyclopædic rather than creative. It has been called an age of art-collectors rather than of artists. Yet it would probably be a mistake to rate it as in any real sense a decaying age. It was too much awake, too much interested in life, too much absorbed in vast experiments in every sphere of human endeavour, ever to be that. Above all must we rid ourselves of the common misconception that this was an age devoid of religion. On the contrary it would be difficult to point to any other three centuries in which religious interests were more pressing and dominant than in the years from Alexander to Christ. The whole restless world was prospecting for a satisfying faith ; and just there was the Gospel's chance.

[1] See Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 3 f. ; Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 29 f. ; Angus, *Environment of Early Christianity*, pp. 12–17.

SECTION I

THE HELLENISTIC PREPARATION

CHAPTER TWO

THE PREPARATION IN RELIGION

I. *Characteristics of Greek Religion*

The opinion has sometimes been hazarded that only in the sphere of religion did the Greek mind, otherwise so liberally endowed for the enrichment of human culture, fail to develop its highest potentialities. Though the failure is only relative, it must be admitted that the very quality of Hellenism in general makes it provokingly difficult to fix and define the chief characteristics of its religion. To follow any one single line of exploration is not enough, and to appreciate Greek religion one must first immerse oneself in the whole of Greek life. Perhaps four reasons may be given for this intangible quality of Hellenistic religion.

(*a*) In the great days of Greece, wherein we must seek the roots of what might be called normative Hellenistic religion, the worship of the gods was in the main a social-political concern. Religion was an aspect of the conduct of the state, and the diversity of Greek politics is reflected in religion. For Greece, on account of the mountains and valleys which intersect it in all directions, has been well called " a land in compartments ". Each city-state developed its

own life and customs within its own territory, and in religion as in politics was subject to few centralizing or standardizing influences "That religion," says Xenophon, "is true for each man which is the religion of his own country."[1] As a result of such a "compartmental" process of development, superimposed upon original variations due to difference of stock and speech and culture (such as distinguished, e.g., Dorian from Ionian or Æolian), and intensified when emigrants from this and that city carried their religious idiosyncracies to the ends of the Greek world, it is vain to look for anything approaching homogeneity in religion.[2]

(*b*) Greek religion never became a book religion in the sense that it produced a sacred literature wherein it became standardized and stereotyped. One may seek the essence of Confucianism in the Four Books, of Islam in the Koran, of Christianity in the New Testament; but there is no such short-cut to the understanding of Hellenistic religion. It is, of course, true that Homer and Hesiod did something to create a universal, not to say uniform, Hellenic religion, so that the Greeks were in some danger of treating their writings as inspired scripture. But the Epics never set up anything approaching a recognized standard of orthodoxy. As Dean Inge puts it: "Homer was never supposed to contain 'the faith once delivered to the saints'; no religion of authority could be built

[1] *Mem.*, iv, 3, 26.

[2] "Everything tended to the variety, idiosyncrasy, originality in cities and in individuals which is the condition of collective progress. All this is reflected in the Greek religions, and constitutes one of the great charms, and also one of the chief difficulties, of a study of them" (G. F. Moore, *History of Religions*, vol. i, p. 412. See also Inge in *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 18).

upon him, and Greek speculation remained far more unfettered than the thought of Christendom has been until our own day." [1]

(*c*) Nor did there exist among the Greeks any universally recognized order of priesthood to create and perpetuate an orthodox tradition. There were, so to speak, no priests at large, a priest being always connected with a particular locality, and concerned to represent not a catholic religion but the particularism of his own shrine. There was thus no tendency towards a priestly systematizing of cult and doctrine, such as might aid the investigator to visualize a homogeneous picture of Greek religion.

(*d*) Finally the outlines of Greek religion are the less easy to define because, for the Greek, religion was as many-sided as life itself. It is our own unfortunate secularization of life in the name of religion which makes it so difficult to form a clear picture of a religion, which regarded theatrical exhibitions and religious assemblies as equally fit occasions for the invocation of the gods, and considered an athlete's offering of his speed at the Olympic games no less an act of worship than priestly prayer and sacrifice. To the Greek every aspect of life was an affair of the gods, to be entered upon only after the propitiation of the fitting deity ; and since there were so many gods to be prayed to, and it made no small difference whether one happened to be an Athenian, Spartan, or Bœotian, the choice of the proper divinity became a nice matter. No wonder that the task of the investigator is equally complicated :

The aim of the present chapter is to trace the main outlines of what has already been called " normative "

[1] *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 43.

Greek religion, that is those characteristic features of Greek religion, emerging most clearly in the great days of classical Greece, which provide the undertone to the many-coloured religious picture of the later Hellenistic age. The later and more fantastic aberrations, largely due to Oriental influences, from the main stream of development will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Such a division of material may appear artificial; but many, perhaps most, of the religious characteristics of the Hellenistic world immediately before the time of Christ fall under Dean Inge's verdict upon the crude sacramentalism of that age: "If Hellenism is the name of a way of thinking, this form of religion is not healthy Hellenism."[1]

II. *Stages of Greek Religion*

Space forbids any descriptive treatment of the Olympian religion, not to speak of the more primitive cults from which it took its rise. "Greek religion," says Farnell, "is presented to us by its various records mainly as a polytheism of personal divinities grouped in certain family relationships around and under a supreme god. . . . And in these theistic creations of the Hellene the dominant impulse was that which we call anthropomorphism, a mode of feeling and thought to which the average Greek temperament was so attracted that both the artistic and religious history of the race were mainly determined by it."[2] Polytheism, anthropomorphism are our two key-notes. In its earliest discoverable forms the Olympian religion

[1] *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 53.
[2] Farnell, *Higher Aspects of Greek Religion*, p. 2.

had already almost entirely outgrown primitive animism, though traces possibly survive in the fear of the dead and the dread of the underworld. The origin of the Olympians is hidden in the mists of antiquity, but there is a tendency to believe that the conquering Aryans from the North may have brought their gods with them (Zeus—old *Dyaus* the Bright One—Lord of the Sky ; Apollo, traditionally the Sun-god, though originally perhaps the god of wild living things ; Poseidon, the Sea-god ; and their fellows), while the religion of the older inhabitants may have supplied the various goddess cults, especially those (e.g. the Demeter cult) intended to promote the fertility of the soil. The Olympians are the mountain gods of the invading Northmen, and like "royal buccaneers"[1] displaced the older gods who had hitherto held sway. There are thus as it were three strata in Greek religion : the ancient Chthonic cults of Earth and Hades, fear-haunted and rooted in a forgotten antiquity ; the colourful and heroic religion of the Olympians ; and the more thoughtful and sophisticated religion of poet and philosopher, where all that is noblest in the Greek religious heritage comes to expression. Yet even these three levels cannot be distinguished in any clean-cut manner, but rather merge the one into the other ; for it is a feature of the evolution of Greek religion that the lower forms of cult and belief persist down the years alongside of the higher and more refined, so that one finds in unexpected places outcroppings of the lower strata. Thus, as Gilbert Murray has remarked, quoting Herodotus, there was a moment when "the Hellenic race was marked off from the barbarian, as more

[1] Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, 67.

intelligent and more emancipated from silly nonsense",[1] and in religion this cardinal moment consists in the coming of the Olympian gods.

III. *The Olympian Gods*

The Olympians have often been regarded as personifications of nature forces. Zeus, for example, is the ancient Indo-Germanic sky-god, whose name corresponds to the Vedic *Dyaus*. Demeter is the goddess of the soil and of crops, and the myth of her daughter Persephone, carried by Hades to the nether realms and forced to return thither for one-third of each year, obviously symbolizes the death of vegetation during winter followed by the vernal transformation when Persephone returns. Yet the explanation of the Olympians as mere nature-personifications is more obvious than true, and can be accepted only with qualifications. Thus there is no evidence that the Greeks knew that Zeus meant "sky", nor that those myths, which to us seem obviously to suggest the fertilization of the earth by the sky, were so understood until the sophists endeavoured to rationalize them along these lines. Zeus was rather a completely anthropomorphic deity, who ruled in heaven no doubt and controlled the thunder and the rain, but not a personification of the sky and its phenomena. And the same is true of his fellow gods and goddesses.[2] It is this anthopomorphism which is the characteristic

[1] Herodotus, i, 60.

[2] "Though many of them have special compartments of nature for their peculiar concern, they are chiefly to be regarded as ethical and intellectual personalities, friendly on the whole to man and powerful to aid in all that concerns his physical and social life" (Farnell, *op. cit.*, p. 2).

note of the religious no less than the artistic development of the Greek race. The Greek did more than worship nature forces and personify them; he humanized his gods. If it be true that in many other religions the human is deified, in Greek religion the divine is humanized, and the gods become vivid symbols of various aspects of human life and society: Athene is the goddess of wisdom, Ares the god of war, Aphrodite the goddess of love.

When men thus project into heaven their own virtues and passions, the danger to moral standards needs no stressing. The picture of the denizens of Olympus, indulging in divine merriment at the embarrassment of Ares and Aphrodite entangled *flagrante delicto* in Hephaistos's net, is but one example of the immoral and irrational myths which early provided occasion for a general attack on religion in the name of reason and virtue. Yet even the polytheistic anthropomorphism of the cult of the Olympians marks an advance over more primitive cults which is little short of a religious reformation. Typical of the new Olympian spirit is that commonest of all architectural motifs, the strife of men against centaurs and of gods against giants. It is the triumph of human reason over animal lust and passion, of beauty and order over mere brute force. For the world is no longer subject to snakes and bulls and thunder-stones, to monsters and fetishes, to inchoate and nameless *daimones* wielding the power of death and the curse of bloodshed, but to personal and reasoning beings, like man no doubt in form and mind and passions, but infinitely wiser and more beautiful. Gilbert Murray in a brilliant study[1] sees in the coming of

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 83 ff.

the Olympian gods a reformation both in the ethical sphere, "an expurgation of the old rites," and also in the sphere of the intellect, "an attempt to bring order into the old chaos." On the ethical side the Olympian cult at its highest at least pushed into the background and decently veiled all those primitive rites which, aiming at the stimulation of the generative processes in the interests either of food-supply or the perpetuation of the tribe, lent themselves to obscene and licentious practice. In the sphere of the intellect a new order was brought into religion by the identification, under a manageable number of names and sets of attributes, of an innumerable host of local and tribal deities. Various types tended to become assimilated to one or other of the most prominent representatives of the class, as when Aphrodite or Artemis absorbs a group of heterogeneous *Korai*, or a similar host of *Koroi* coalesce into Apollo or Dionysos. Thus there was produced an intelligible pantheon consisting of beings who can be described as *πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία*—"one form of many names."

That the "reformation" failed does not lessen the significance of the attempt. And fail it admittedly did. For no thorough "moral expurgation" is possible by means of an anthopomorphic polytheism with its roots in primitive nature worship. Once humanize the elements of a nature religion, and you immediately transform, let us say, an ethically neutral thunderbolt into a capricious or cruel or even vicious Zeus; while to seek to draw a decent veil over primitive fertility rites by converting them into the worship of "an anthropomorphic god of enormous procreative power and innumerable amours"[1] is but to intensify

[1] Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

and perpetuate the moral degradation. And as for the quest of order out of chaos, the most notable attempt is the Theogony of Hesiod, and "the work or Hesiod as a whole is one of the most valiant failures in literature. The confusion and absurdity of it are only equalled by its strange helpless beauty".[1] Out of such a welter of gods the only road to intellectual order would have been that which ended in monotheism. But though in the person of its great philosophers and poets—Xenophanes, Parmenides, Aeschylus, Plato—the classic age of Greece came surprisingly near to a monotheism which might well have surpassed in catholicity the national monotheism of contemporary Hebrew religion, it always just missed the goal, and so far as the popular religion went never came within sight of it. Yet in spite of all this failure something had been achieved by the Olympian reformation. It redeemed Hellenic worship in part at least from the shuddering dread of a miasma-haunted underworld, and lifted up men's eyes from Hades to the bright mountain tops. It created a measure of brotherhood throughout the various Greek communities, something approaching a Pan-Hellenic religious feeling to stand over against the "silly nonsense" of the barbarian. And above all it made religion beautiful, for here "we see a people endowed beyond all others with a sense of beauty and an inexhaustible joy in the beautiful worshipping gods who were their ideal of beauty. When we look at the sculptures of the Parthenon, for example, and imagine the Panathenaic procession moving in all its wealth of colour under the vibrant light amid the temples and monuments of Periclean Athens, we cannot conceive that any god was ever honoured with a more glorious worship".[2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 87. [2] Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 470.

IV. *The Early Mystery Cults*

The Mystery religions in general will call for fuller treatment in a later chapter. But the older Greek mystery cults may be legitimately distinguished from the later syncretistic Oriental Mysteries, and as they have their place in the development of normative Hellenistic religion they may have brief mention here. Broadly speaking their source is twofold—in the cult of Demeter, the old Greek goddess of the soil and crops, and in that of Dionysos, who is apparently a later divine immigrant from half-barbarous Thrace. The Demeter cult, as has already been noted, had its origin in the nature-myth wherein is symbolized the annual death and rebirth of vegetation. The Dionysos worship was in its primitive form savagely orgiastic, celebrated by raving worshippers, in particular the female votaries or "Mænads", in a Bacchic frenzy of waving torches, wild dances, and the dripping blood of living victims torn limb from limb. But on his arrival in Greece Dionysos was tamed and civilized, and took his place as the god of the vine side by side with Demeter the goddess of crops. His festivals, the Dionysia, became Bacchic celebrations, and are chiefly important as the source out of which the Attic drama was developed. The urge behind the growth of both these cults, and the secret of their increasing popularity, is the same—man's yearning after the hope of immortality. For in Dionysos as in Demeter men found the promise of that divine life-power which in spring's pageant triumphs over nature's wintry death. If man would share in that immortality, which is the possession of gods alone, he must first himself participate in the divine nature; and in that quest

it is not to the happy deathless Olympians that he turns, but to those deities who themselves have triumphed over death and risen to the new life, Demeter-Kore and Dionysos.

(*a*) *Orphic Religion.*

The various aspects of this Dionysiac cult are commonly subsumed under the broad category of "Orphic" religion, so called from its association with the name of Orpheus, the legendary Thracian singer, who after charming with his lyre even the heart of the Queen of Hades was torn in pieces by the Mænads, thus perishing as did his god Dionysos. As a way of salvation from death the new Orphic gospel, which by the middle of the sixth century (B.C.) was widely diffused throughout Greece, conducted a vigorous missionary propaganda, and organized its votaries everywhere into Orphic brotherhoods. While the old religion had in the main been concerned with this world only, the Orphic gospel both awakened the worshipper's conscious longing after something beyond this mortal state, and through communion with the cult deity promised him a foretaste even now of the eternal divine life. In particular it was concerned, not with city or tribe, but with the individual himself. It demanded personal faith, and set forth a plan of salvation to be individually pursued—purifications wherein the old man was put off, sacraments whereby the new divine life was appropriated, mystic rites and ceremonies wherein a vision of the godhead was guaranteed. Significant too is the Orphic eschatology, including such ideas as the transmigration of souls, a Bacchic Elysium wherein the happy initiates spend

an eternity in blissful, though not always refined, delights, and an Orphic Hell wherein, as Plato quotes the doctrine, " he who arrives in Hades uninitiated and without having participated in the mysteries lies in filth." It would be interesting to speculate to what extent orthodox Christianity later fell heir to these Orphic inventions of the " miry pit " of Hell.

(*b*) *The Eleusinian Mysteries.*

Chief among the Greek Mysteries, because alone recognized as a branch of the established state religion —the Orphic cults being purely free and sectarian— were the Mysteries of Eleusis, which had their origin apparently in a local cult of Demeter symbolizing as usual the revival of plant life after winter's death, wherein is seen the promise that man too may rise to newness of life. The would-be initiate first underwent rites of purification from blood guilt ; next he was admitted to the " Lesser Mysteries " held in February in a suburb of Athens ; thereafter in September he took his place in the great procession of white-robed Mystae, which wended its way by the Sacred Street to the " Great Mysteries " at Eleusis, where *tableaux vivants* from the myth of Demeter were probably acted ; and finally, after another year of probation, he was admitted to the highest degree of the *epoptes*, and was vouchsafed the vision of the awe-inspiring contents of the sacred ark. " O thrice-blessed those mortals," sings Sophocles, " who having beheld these mysteries descend to Hades ; to them alone it is given to live ; for the rest all evils are there."

(*c*) *Significance of the Cults.*

The general influence of the Mysteries on Christianity must be discussed more fully elsewhere. Meanwhile the significance of these earlier mystery cults for the development of Hellenistic religious ideas may be briefly summarized thus. *Firstly*, as already noted, they gave new scope for the growth of personal religion, and for the quickening and satisfaction of the individual hope of immortality. *Secondly*, they gave freer play than did the worship of the old Hellenic gods to the emotional element in religion ; here men thought to feel the divine life actually throbbing in their pulses, and in vision and trance and ecstasy to find the supreme experience of God. The bearing of this upon early popular Christianity is important. It is largely due to the example of the mystery cults, wherein emotional exaltation was highly prized and ecstatic conditions were regarded as the guarantee of authentic religious experience, that Christianity too was tempted to point to emotional " signs and wonders and powers " as proof of the possession of the Spirit. *Thirdly*, we see here the emergence on pagan soil of a " churchly " type of religion. The Orphic cults gathered their converts into societies and brotherhoods, and though their organization was loose and there is no sign of a central authority or a uniform standard of belief and practice, such small voluntary religious associations, the members of which were united by a common relationship to the cult deity, undoubtedly served as a model for the local churches of early Gentile Christianity. Travelling evangelists too went about the country preaching the Orphic salvation and admitting their

converts to the mystic fellowship. The Orphics moreover, so far as we know, were the first to enunciate on Greek soil the principle that the initiates alone, the members of the mystery church, can have hope of salvation. Logically this implies that apart from such sacramental means of grace not even the greatest virtue avails for salvation, while the initiate, moral considerations apart, becomes *ex opere operato* an acceptable candidate for eternal life—a doctrine which stung Diogenes to ask sarcastically whether the robber Pataikon would fare better after death than Epaminondas, because he had been initiated and the hero had not. But in practice men's ethical sense revolted against such a doctrine, and a more or less explicit insistence upon moral rectitude as a condition of salvation appears in the popular proverb, " Many carry the sacred wand, but few are the Bacchoi " ; many are called to the sacred rites, but few are chosen for salvation. Nevertheless, the seeds have been sown of the High Church thesis of cult-exclusiveness— " without the Church no salvation."

V. *The Religion of the Poets*

But it is to philosopher and poet we must look for the noblest expression of Greek religion ; and if the philosophers have had the greatest permanent influence on the development of religious thought, the immediate influence of the poets was far greater, for at the great popular athletic and dramatic festivals the Odes of a Pindar or the Tragedies of a Sophocles would move a hundred " men in the street " for every single scholar reached by a Plato. " The great contribution of the Greek poets to religion," writes

G. F. Moore,[1] "is the revelation of the unity of the moral order of the world, or in more theological phrase the unity of the divine rule in the world." They thus played their part in preparing the way towards monotheism. Pindar, for example, in his Odes expurgates the ancient polytheistic mythology, tones down the passions and frailties of individual deities into a uniform wisdom and goodness, and by ascribing to every deity the divine perfections which were originally peculiar to each, directs men's reverence not to this god and that but to the godhead in itself. The moral order of the world is personified in Zeus—call him Providence, Destiny, Justice—not merely because he is the king of the gods, but because, as Paul would put it, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead." This faith is expressed still more nobly by Æschylus, to whom Zeus is not only the greatest of the gods, but God.[2]

If Æschylus vindicates the majesty of the divine rule, Sophocles seeks to let light into the problem of human suffering. If suffering be punishment for sin, where is the justice of God's dealing with a man like Œdipus the King, who in all innocence sows the most dreadful deeds and reaps the direst penalties? Sophocles, says Jebb, "leaves the problem unsolved.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 483.

[2] Zeus, whoe'er he is, if such the name
Suits his royal pleasure well,
Thus would I his style proclaim—
Else in sooth I cannot tell,
Weighing every power I know,
Save Zeus alone, if I indeed may throw
From my breast this causeless woe. . . .
But he who swells to Zeus the triumph-strain,
All of wisdom shall obtain.
(Æsch., *Agam.* 1st Chor. Trans. Conington.)

But he contributes at least one inestimable thought towards its solution. He teaches that suffering is not necessarily an evil. Suffering may educate and ennoble the character, as in the case of Œdipus. It may bring the victory of a cause which the sufferer prizes above life, as in the case of Antigone. Or, even if there be nothing of comfort or compensation for the individual victim, his suffering may have been ordained, in the hidden wisdom of the gods, for the good of mankind."[1] "Courage, my child," says the Chorus to Electra, "courage; great Zeus still reigns in heaven who sees and governs all."

Of very different spirit was Euripides, the typical religious "modernist" of his day. "Euripides," says Dean Inge, "anticipated to an extraordinary degree the devout agnosticism, the vague pantheism, the humanitarian sentiment of the nineteenth century."[2] The popular pictures of the gods he indignantly disavows as "blasphemous fictions of epic poets". In the prayers of Hecuba we hear the pious agnostic: "O thou . . . whosoe'er thou art, hard to know by our conjectures, Zeus, whether that mean the inexorable law of nature or human intelligence, thee I address in prayer."[3] And here speaks the pantheist:

> Seest thou the boundless ether there on high,
> That folds the earth around with dewy arms?
> This deem thou Zeus, this reckon one with God.

Rebel and sceptic, Euripides sometimes seems to doubt whether gods and morals alike are anything more than social conventions: "For by law we

[1] Jebb, *Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry*, p. 183.
[2] *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 29.
[3] Quoted by Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 487.

believe in the gods and distinguish wrong from right in human conduct." No wonder that Aristophanes lashes the poet as one even more responsible than the sophists for the current waning of faith and collapse of morals.

VI. *The "Failure of Nerve"*

The truth is that Euripides marks the beginning of the breaking up of the ancient religious foundations. The first cracks were appearing in the social fabric of the city-state with which the traditional religion had been so closely connected, and with the rapid disintegration of the Polis, following upon the rise of Macedon, there took place a parallel collapse of the old religious beliefs, sanctions and loyalties. The process was hastened by the ridicule of sophist and poet and the realization that the old religion, if taken at its face value, was not only scientifically preposterous but, worse still, was ethically bankrupt and able to satisfy neither man's moral requirements nor his spiritual aspirations. The fall of the Olympians changed the whole complexion of religious thought. Normal Greek religion had hitherto been shot through with the zest of life and joy in all things beautiful, and felt little of that weariness with life which casts its shadow over Buddhism and Hinduism. The Greek too was a "once-born" man, and while he remained true to type he never took sin very tragically, and had little sense of moral defeat. But as we advance into the later Hellenistic age, and largely under the pressure of the Oriental influences let loose by Alexander and his successors, we become more and more conscious of a subtle change of atmosphere.

Gilbert Murray has called it a "failure of nerve".[1] Chiefly significant is this heightened sense of sin and consciousness of the need of divine grace, which is the presupposition of that universal longing for "salvation" wherein we shall find the prime *Præparatio Evangelica* of the Hellenistic Age. As evidence of this change of mood we may note the following tendencies, to some of which we must return more fully in later chapters.

(*a*) *The worship of blind "Chance"* as the supreme arbiter of human destiny. Once deny the existence of personal deities, who order mundane affairs in accordance with understandable motives of wisdom and justice, and no alternative seems left but that all things happen "by chance". The next step is to place the goddess Tyche on the throne vacated by Zeus. Such a development was specially likely in an age of rapid change, when stable society seemed to be tottering, and when for the individual, with his sense of security gone, the constant shiftings of fortune, often at the whim of a competing succession of despots and quite independent of his own deserts, might well appear to nullify the very laws of cause and effect. Men felt themselves in the grip of the blind goddess, and what escape could there be save by placating her by their worship? "Throughout the whole world," writes Pliny later, as he looks

[1] "It is hard to describe. It is a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense, of pessimism; a loss of self-confidence, of hope in this life and of faith in normal human effort; a despair of patient enquiry, a cry for infallible revelation; an indifference to the welfare of the state, a conversion of the soul to God. It is an atmosphere in which the aim of the good man is not so much to live justly . . . but rather . . . to be granted pardon for his immeasurable sins" (Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 155, to whom I am indebted for much in this chapter).

back over the Hellenistic age, "at every place and hour, by every voice Fortune alone is invoked and her name spoken. . . . We are so much at the mercy of chance that Chance is our God."[1] The philosophers of course had a more respectable alternative; one should say not, "it happened by chance," but "destiny decreed it so"; it is not Tyche who rules but "Heimarmene"—that fine thread of deliberate purpose, as Zeno put it, which runs through the whole of life and binds it in an inescapable chain of cause and effect. But the practical result for the ordinary man was but an exchange of prisons, for the fiat of Fate, no less than the foibles of Fortune, might well seem to nullify the value of all human endeavour. There must have been many besides Epicurus who deplored this by-product of Hellenistic "modernism": he would rather, he said, be a slave to the gods of the vulgar than to the Destiny of the philosophers.

(*b*) *Astral Cults.*

Secondly, and closely akin to the tendency just noted, we see a relapse into religious servitude to cosmic forces, which expresses itself in the deification of the heavenly bodies. To this we must recur later, when dealing more fully with some of the theological aberrations of later Oriental Gnosticism. Having rejected anthropomorphic gods, men turned back to worship the phenomena of earth and sky, of which they had been considered personifications. Thus nearly all Hellenistic writers regard the Sun, Moon and Stars as gods. By the first Christian century

[1] *Nat. Hist.*, ii, 22.

Plutarch could find a hint of the universality of true religion in the fact that we all look upon the same Sun and Moon, by whatever name we may call them.[1] Earth too herself resumes the divinity which had previously been delegated to the ancient Kore, and carries with her into this materialistic pantheon the other elements of Water, Air and Fire. The worship of the Sun was greatly stimulated when the Hellenistic world, chiefly as a result of the later Roman conquests, came under the influence of the Persian cult of "Mithras the Unconquered Sun". The Seven Planets too, each ruling in its own sphere, increasingly compelled men's adoration, though there is some uncertainty whether the planet itself is divine, or is merely swayed by the divine spirit whose name it bears. In any case we find the Olympians reappearing as astral deities. The planets too are themselves constituent Elements of the universe, and their Daemons are worshipped as such—*Stoicheia*, the very word which was used of the Greek ABC, the seven vowels in which are the mystic signs of these planetary divinities—the elemental Daemons or "beggarly rudiments of the world", against whom Paul inveighs in Galatians iv. Here magician and astrologer found their stock in trade, and the worshipper a new and worse bondage.

(*c*) *Deification of Men.*

Chrysippus sums up the gods as "the Sun, Moon, and *men who have become gods*"; the growth of the idea that man might himself attain to divinity is a third significant development. If the Olympian

[1] *De Iside*, etc., 67.

cult had humanized God, later Hellenistic religion promised to deify man. Nor is it hard to trace the influences at work. Over against the primitive instinct to insist on the difference between man and God, the philosophers had consistently recognized the divine element in every man's soul. To the great kings from Alexander onwards popular convention had even in their lifetime accorded " divine " status and attributes, from which it was easily deduced that all the traditional gods were but old-world kings and benefactors, who had been promoted to heaven by the vote of their grateful subjects—an idea which finds classic expression in the famous romance of Euhemerus. And finally the mystery cults held out even to the ordinary man the promise that he too might become divine, could he but through knowledge of the sacred mysteries, and sacramental union with the redeemer god, escape from the old mortal man and be " reborn into eternity ".

VII. *The Quest for Salvation*

With this background in view it is easier to understand that universal longing for *soteria* or salvation, which is so characteristic of Hellenistic religion.[1]

[1] By the time of Christ one may almost speak of a typical " Hellenistic Theology " which under endless variations presents, according to E. R. Bevan, the following common ideas: " There was first the fundamental conviction that the world accessible to the senses, the material world, was evil—or at any rate very inferior to the transcendent world of light. There was next the conviction that in the soul of man somehow or other an element from that divine world had got mixed up in the material sphere. And lastly there was the conviction that by some means or other the divine element could free itself and win its way back to the sphere whence it came " (Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*, p. 92).

Soteria is such an escape from such a prison-house. Broadly speaking the idea of salvation runs parallel with the development of religious ideas listed under (*a*), (*b*), (*c*), above. On the one hand there is the negative aspect—escape from those forces which hold man a helpless prisoner, whether it be from the mere weight of material existence, or from that fear of Chance's whim and Fate's inexorable decree which with its denial of free-will was perhaps the chief root of ancient pessimism, or, to put the same thought otherwise, from the wheel of cosmic necessity to which man imagined himself to be bound, controlled by starry influences and subject to those demonic *kosmokratores* — "world-rulers of this darkness" Paul calls them—which loom so large in Apostolic polemic. Much of Paul's teaching on redemption is quite unintelligible except in the light of this universal longing for some scheme of cosmic salvation from these "principalities and powers and spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places" which held the whole universe enthralled. On the other hand *soteria* has its positive aspect. It is the achievement by the individual of his quest for eternal life, wherein the soul, akin by nature to the divine, lays hold of its true birthright. And here we touch the core of Hellenistic theology ; the way to such salvation is through the knowledge of God. St. John speaks in the true accents of Hellenism when he says, "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God." But the knowledge in question is not merely an activity of man's reason ; it is direct enlightenment from above, so that *Gnosis* takes on the special meaning of knowledge supernaturally given of those mysteries of the unseen world to which man's reason

by itself cannot attain. And even such knowledge cannot save apart from an accompanying bestowal and appropriation of the divine life-power. As Harnack puts it, " there is the conviction that whilst knowledge is indispensable to all the media of redemption, it cannot be adequate ; on the contrary they must ultimately furnish and transmit an actual power divine. It is the ' initiation ' (the mystery or sacrament) which is combined with the impartation of knowledge, by which alone the spirit is subdued, by which it is actually redeemed and delivered from the bondage of mortality and sin by means of mystic rapture." [1] Intellectualism, sacramentalism—here in an apparent antinomy are the characteristic notes of later Hellenistic religion.

After what has been said it must be obvious that nothing can be falser than the prevalent misconception that the period immediately preceding the Christian era was an irreligious age. Bankrupt the old religious notions certainly were ; but for that very reason the yearning after a better and universal religion was the more intense. The Christian missions succeeded, not because the message of Jesus filled a void of which men were hardly conscious, but because men everywhere were keenly awake to every new message of hope and eagerly prospecting for a " saviour ". As one nears the birth of Jesus there seems to be something more than mere coincidence in this general mood of expectancy. Messianic ideas were in the air not only in the Jewish but in the Pagan world. In Virgil, in particular, one meets again and again with the conception, which reaches its climax in the famous " Messianic Eclogue ", that soon there

[1] *Expansion of Christianity*, i, p. 35.

will appear a divinely sent deliverer of mankind. This was an age no doubt when men were puzzled about religion, even disillusioned and not a little sceptical,

> "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born,"

but they were not without hope that some day soon that other world would be born. And there was the new Gospel's chance.

But in the final analysis, if one is asked what is the supreme gift of Hellenism to religion, one is inclined to reply with Dean Inge that "it is the faith that Truth is our friend, and that the knowledge of Truth is not beyond our reach".[1] This is an aspect of religion which may seem to have been little illustrated in the preceding pages. But we may remind ourselves, as Bacon says, that philosophy is the religion of the ancients. It is the philosophers too who redress that characteristic ethical weakness of popular Greek religion, wherein it runs true to the Greek point of view in general—the tendency to connect piety but little with moral conduct. Thus it is to the philosopher we must turn for the richest contribution of Hellenism to religion.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 55.

Chapter Three

THE PREPARATION IN PHILOSOPHY

"What has the Christian to do with the philosopher?" asks the bigoted Tertullian; to which Clement makes the rejoinder that philosophy is God's "special covenant with the Greeks as a basis for the philosophy according to Christ",[1] while Christianity itself is "the genuinely true philosophy"[2]; and the consensus of the early apologists is with him in recognizing that Christianity can compel assent only when it is exhibited in the setting of a comprehensive philosophy intelligible to thinking men in each new age. It is the supreme service of Greece to have provided such a setting.

The earliest Greek philosophers—Thales, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, and their fellows—were primarily physicists, and it is only with Socrates that the main line of inquiry is diverted from the nature of matter to human nature itself, from physics to ethics, from the mechanism of the universe to the determination of good and evil in human conduct. Socrates may be said to be the discoverer of Conscience, "the wife from whom there is no divorce," and it is in fact to him and his immediate followers that Christianity owes those fundamental conceptions of right and wrong, within which the educated conscience still moves when confronted with an ethical alternative. In this brief study of the

[1] *Strom.*, vi, 8. [2] *Strom.*, i, 13.

preparation for Christianity in Greek philosophy we can trace only the main streams ; the lesser tributaries we must, perforce, leave unexplored.

I. *Platonism*

The foremost exponent of Socratic ideas was Plato ; and above all other philosophers he has exercised the most potent influence upon Christianity, and that not only directly but indirectly, for Platonism penetrated every later system, in particular Stoicism and Neo-Platonism, and through them redoubled its influence on Christianity itself. Of this the early Apologists were very conscious. According to Justin Martyr " the teachings of Plato are not different from the teachings of Christ ", and he confesses that it was while " delighting in the teachings of Plato " that he himself, through the witness of Christian martyrs, was won for Christ.[1] The abiding influence of Platonism may perhaps be summarized under the following propositions :—

(*a*) *The "Ideas"*.

Fundamental is Plato's theory of knowledge and of reality. Socrates had argued that only the knowledge of " concepts " guarantees a true knowledge ; Plato takes the next step by maintaining that true being belongs only to that which is thought in concepts, that is to the " ideas ". Whereas all that the senses perceive is subject to ceaseless change, that and that alone which is inaccessible to the senses and known by thought only may be permanent, consistent, eternal.

[1] *Apol.*, ii, 12–15.

We must therefore learn to distinguish the unchangeable originals of things, the "ideas", which alone have true being, from their appearance as objects of sense. Plato thus flung out an anchor of hope to bewildered men drifting under the puzzling and depressing sense of uncertainty and instability inherent in that doctrine, so dear to the ancient physicists, of the flux of all things. His message will never lose its power so long as man wrestles with the problem of the transient and the eternal; and it was a Christian Apostle who gave to it its most concise statement, when he declared that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal".

(*b*) *The "Good"*.

Equally important is Plato's insistence on the ultimate reality of the Good. All his "ideas" stand in a definite progressive relation to one another, and the supreme apex is reached in what is called "the idea of the Good". All that is in the world is as it is because it is best so; and therefore it is only really conceived when it is referred to the Good as its final object. Thus it is the idea of Good which gives both to the Universe its reality and to man his capacity for knowledge. And this idea of Good, as the absolute ground of all being, becomes for Plato coincident with the Deity. Thus Plato puts goodness on the throne of the universe as being both the source and the goal of the whole world-process, and sees in the attainment of goodness the supreme quest of all things. As for man, he is a "plant of heavenly origin", and can attain to his true being only in the knowledge

of that goodness which is the ultimate reality : as another great Christian prophet would put it, " this is life eternal to know Thee, the only Real God."

(*c*) *Rational Monotheism.*

Though Plato never actually raises the question of the personality of God, by this insistence upon the Good, as coincident with the Deity and the absolute ground of all being, he provides the philosophic basis for a rational monotheism, a gift which, when combined with the ethical and personalistic monotheism of the Old Testament, was of inestimable value to Christianity. The influence upon early Christian theology of the Platonic doctrine of the supreme idea of the Good manifesting itself in the Divine Reason (Logos) is readily traceable in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, and is still more evident in the writings of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Augustine.

(*d*) *Platonic Ethics.*

In the realm of ethics Plato owes everything to Socrates. The basis of all true virtue is knowledge ; to do right without knowledge is impossible : not to do right is equally impossible if what is right is truly known. All virtues are thus in a sense one : yet, because to each of the principal virtues belongs a special place in the soul, with this unity of virtue Plato can combine a plurality of virtues, the chief of which are four. *Wisdom* consists in the right quality of the reason : *courage* is the outcome of reason's verdict on what is and is not to be feared : *self-control* is the unanimity of each part of the soul on the question

which is to command and which obey : *justice* is the total effect of such a harmonious relationship, when each part of the soul fulfils and does not overstep its own peculiar function. As for the soul itself, its true home is in the world beyond the senses, whereas the body with its sensual life is but its prison-house and grave. To fulfil his mission man must escape the material world and become assimilated to the divine ; for it is the rule of the divine reality within us that can alone make us rich and free. Again we hear the Christian echo : " That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. . . . Ye must be born again. . . . Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

(*e*) *Immortality.*

For Plato the soul is inherently and intrinsically immortal, for the basis of the soul is reason, and reason is indestructible. Yet it is an impersonal immortality, for this immortal basis of the soul enters one new-born babe after the other, and has nothing to do with individual character and personality, which are developed by each individual in the course of his life and pass away at his death—a doctrine as far removed as possible from the Christian hope of immortality, and the cause of not a little misunderstanding between Paul and his Pagan converts. Primitive Christianity, of course, based its hope of unending life on the Person and death and resurrection of Jesus and the individual union of the Christian with him. But as Christianity expanded into its Hellenistic environment the need was felt for additional philosophic arguments ; and it was chiefly to Plato that the Church turned.

(f) Rational Religion.

But possibly the richest bequest of Platonism was the secret that the keenest intellectual search after truth may be combined with a religious and devotional contemplation of truth itself, and conversely that the religion of rational and intelligent beings must at least be reasonable and intelligible, something to which the intellect as well as the emotions may pay homage. Paul was a true Platonist when he insisted that a valid religious experience is not restricted to exceptional ecstatic individuals, or to be confounded with abnormal non-moral emotional phenomena, but belongs to all those and only to those who are prepared to lay upon the altar of God both the intellect and the emotions : " I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. . . . I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue " (1 Cor. xiv, 15, 19). As Thomas Traherne puts it, " he who thinks well serves God in the innermost court."

II. *The Cynics*

Of the lesser Socratic schools the most interesting is that of the Cynics, founded by Antisthenes, an older contemporary of Plato, and made famous by the eccentric Diogenes. Antisthenes, who set up his school in Kynosarges, the gymnasium of the base-born, where he developed a vividly parabolic and emotional type of preaching, is generally credited with having originated the literary form known as *διατριβή*, which in turn is the prototype of the Christian *ὁμιλία*, a homily or sermon. Diogenes,

the son of a money-changer who had been imprisoned for fraud, made it his aim in life, as he put it, to " deface the coinage ", to reject all conventional stamps and evaluations as so much base metal with lying superscriptions. Only " virtue " herself is good, and for the Cynic, unlike Plato, virtue is largely a matter of action, and does not require either many words or much knowledge. If happiness is to be found only in " virtue ", then virtue itself consists chiefly in a state of independence from externals and freedom from unnecessary " needs ". Man's salvation lies in a return to nature : let him live like the beasts " a dog's life ", like primitive men who do not vex their hearts with imaginary sins and artificial conventions. Let him face the hard buffetings of fortune in the conviction that it is better to fight for the right and fall having done your best, than to share the victory and prosperity of the unjust ; and at the end let him face the uncertain future with the " cynical " optimism of the great sage himself : " Bury me," said Diogenes, " face downwards, for everything is soon going to be turned the other way up." The Cynic's lasting contribution is that he stands as the permanent type of one way of wrestling with life's terrors, namely to face them as would a soldier a long and arduous campaign, holding on to his morals in the face of bewildering defeat, and counting the doing of his Duty as his true and only prize.

III. *Aristotle and the Peripatetics*

Very different was the turn given to Platonic thought by Aristotle and the Peripatetics, to whom above all other schools posterity is indebted for the

preservation of that characteristic quality of Hellenism, which else was in some danger of suffering eclipse, the love and pursuit of truth for its own sake. Amidst the ecstasies of one school, and the self-suppressions of another, Aristotle exercised a steadying influence by the calm and essentially Hellenic *sophrosune* of his temper. His school was one which accepted the world as it is and tried to understand it, instead of either rejecting it as beneath the wise man's contempt, or conjuring up some Utopia into which it might be transformed. For two things in particular Christian theology is Aristotle's debtor—his extraordinary skill in creating a philosophical terminology, and his assumption that truth is never static and that further seeking will not only increase but correct our knowledge. Though his interests are essentially philosophic rather than religious, the quest of the intellect after truth rather than the yearning of the heart for salvation, Aristotle nevertheless profoundly influenced the development of religious thought. His contemptuous rejection of anthropomorphic mythology, his courageous effort to harmonize religion and science in a higher synthesis, his magnificent conception of the Deity or First Cause as unmoved itself while moving all the universe "as the beloved moves the lover"—all this stamps him as a great religious teacher, and one to be numbered among our "tutors unto Christ".

IV. *The Teaching of the Stoics*

A familiar story tells how a certain philosopher, after studying in the Peripatetic school, went and sat at the feet of Chrysippus the Stoic, and was amazed

to find himself in a new world : " It was like turning from men to Gods." For, as Zeller has well said, " Stoicism is not only a system of philosophy, but also a system of religion." And here it is that, for good or evil, we see most clearly the influence of Hellenistic philosophy upon the Christian Gospel. In Stoicism we have one of the strongest cultural links between Greece proper and Rome, for though the founders of the school—Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus—flourished in Athens, it exercised its greatest influence and found its richest expression among the Romans, to whose dour, unspeculative nature its teaching was peculiarly congenial ; for Stoicism is essentially more akin to the Puritanism of the Cynics than to the idealism and intellectualism of Plato and Aristotle. Again we shall summarize under six main propositions :—

(*a*) *Physics.*

The Stoic system of physics, in contrast to Platonic idealism, is a thoroughgoing materialism, which may be traced back to Heraclitus, according to whom there is no principle in the universe but matter, and only the corporeal is real. Nevertheless, the Stoics distinguished between matter itself and the forces at work in it, between the passive principle which is created and directed and the active principle which is the creative force. The latter they identified with " reason " which as *logos spermatikos* is immanent in all things as a formative and life-giving power. Yet even this, like all that is real, is in a sense corporeal, and is characterized as *pneuma*, warm vapour or fire, through which as the operative principle in the universe the creative reason expresses itself.

In the process of the world's formation this fiery vapour, in which creative reason is immanent, is transformed first into air and then into water, whence finally the earth is precipitated; and when the present world has run its course, a final conflagration will transform all things once more into a mass of fiery vapour, whence once more a new world will emerge, to be followed at the behest of an inexorable necessity by an infinite succession of worlds exactly similar in every minutest detail, linked together in an unescapable chain of cause and effect, and moving onwards in an endless circle of birth and destruction.

(*b*) *Theology.*

By this doctrine of the immanence in all things of creative reason the Stoics brought together once more the material world and the ideal world which Plato had set asunder, and by asserting the unity of the final cause prepared the way for the recognition in the world of a single divine principle. The theology of the Stoics is directly dependent on their physics. For in the supreme creative Power—conceived of in their material terminology as a fifth element or divine fire, and named variously Zeus, Destiny, Providence, Universal Law, Nature—they recognized God, in the Hymn of the religious Cleanthes a God who can be certainly worshipped and almost loved and trusted : " For neither for mortals nor for gods is there greater gift than justly to hymn the Universal Law for ever." To the world, to whom He gives its life and its properties and its movement, the Deity stands in the relation of soul to body. Thus we have a theology of immanence, which in the development of religious ideas is a valuable offset to the transcendental

views of Plato and Aristotle. Says Seneca of God : " We understand Jove to be ruler and guardian of the whole, mind and breath of the Universe, lord and artificer of this fabric. . . . He it is whose thought provides for the universe that it may move on its course unhurt and do its part. . . . He it is of whom all things are born, by whose breath we live. . . . He himself is this whole that you see, fills his own parts, sustains himself and what is his." [1] As for man, since he too is part of the cosmos, God the world-reason is immanent in him, and as Epictetus says he is a " fragment of God ",[2] even a " son of God ",[3] or according to Horace " a little portion of divine breath "—thoughts which Paul echoes in Athens, " for we are also His offspring " (Acts xvii, 28). Hence, as Seneca writes to his friend Lucilius : " God is near you, with you, within you ; a holy Spirit sits within us, watcher of our good and evil deeds, and guardian over us "—and then, quoting Virgil,

" What God we know not, yet a God there dwells." [4]

Characteristic too is Stoic determinism. If the Stoics did not actually coin the word Providence, it was certainly they who put it into general circulation. Let the vulgar believe that blind Chance ruled the world : for the Stoic all was Order, Law, Fate. Yet it was an all-wise Fate, and that which it decreed for man was best for him, for the God of whose design the universe was the product made the laws which ruled it, Himself obeyed those laws, and summed them up in that universal law which was really Himself. Yet this doctrine, lofty though it was, suffered alike from a vagueness

[1] *Nat. Quaest.*, ii, 45.
[2] *D.*, ii, 8.
[3] D., i, 9.
[4] Seneca, *Ep.*, 41, 2.

about God and a pessimism about man. "I put myself in the hands of a Stoic," writes Justin Martyr, "and I stayed a long time with him, but when I got no further in the matter of God—for he did not know himself and he used to say that this knowledge was not necessary—I left him." [1] There is the characteristic weakness of a theology of immanence which denies true personality to God and man alike. And as for man, Stoicism is at heart incurably pessimistic. A philosophy of the moral aristocracy, it thought of the mass of men as in this world incapable of rising far above the brute, and in the world to come destined merely to be merged in that divine fiery essence of which their souls were sparks, to be born again and yet again in a hopeless succession of identical reincarnations. The Stoic was left with not even an illusion as to the moral progress of the ages.[2]

(*c*) *The Secret of Happiness.*

The founder of Stoicism was first led to philosophy by the necessity of finding a basis for his moral life, and ethics never ceased to be central for the School, its main aim being to make men happy and self-sufficient by the practice of virtue. "Of the subjects of philosophical investigation," writes Aristo of Chios, "some concern us, some have no relation to us, some are beyond our reach; ethics is of the first class, logic and dialectic of the second, physics of the third." [3]

[1] *Dial. c. Tryph.*, 2.

[2] As Dr. Glover well says, "the most striking outcome of this attitude is to be seen in Marcus Aurelius, working for ever for the good of his subjects and more than half convinced that, in spite of all his labour and thought and care, nothing worth while would ever be effected" (T. R. Glover, *Progress in Religion*, 225).

[3] *Diog. Laert.*, vii, 160; quoted by Zeller in *Stoics and Epicureans.*

The secret of happiness is to "live consistently with nature"; but it must be confessed that this "life according to nature" appears often as the vaguest of generalities, covering what one might term now Naturalism, now Realism, now even a crude Animalism. To grasp the highest Stoic thought we need a definition of "Nature". "In the world we can see a moving Purpose. It is '*Phusis*', the word which the Romans unfortunately translated '*Natura*', but which means 'growing' or 'the way things grow'—almost what we call Evolution. But to the Stoic it is a living and conscious evolution, a forethought or *πρόνοια* in the mind of God, what the Romans called '*providentia*', guiding all things that grow in a direction which accords with the Divine will."[1] Hence the way to be happy is to go in the direction of the Divine will, to desire what God wills to give you, just as unhappiness usually arises from the desire of something which you cannot acquire. This is to "live according to nature", for in the last analysis nature is God. Here too is the motive for that characteristic steeling of the heart against the blows of an apparently unkind fate. Even such a decree is all-wise, and nothing better could have happened; for the supreme Power, Providence, Nature is not only all-wise but all-virtuous, and what it decrees is best. "The end of life," says Diogenes Laertius, "is to act in conformity with nature, that is, at once with the nature which is in us and with the nature of the universe. . . . Thus the life according to nature is that virtuous and blessed flow of existence, which is enjoyed only by one who always acts so as to

[1] Gilbert Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

maintain the harmony between the daemon within the individual and the will of the Power that orders the universe." [1] Such is the ideal happiness which the world with all its pleasures, sorrows and accidents can neither give nor take away.

(*d*) *Ethics in General.*

Upon this central doctrine Stoic ethics in general are based. Special emphasis is placed upon the exercise of the will, that man may set himself resolutely to live in obedience to Reason and in accord with Nature. To such things as are not under the control of his will he must be entirely indifferent—even to the love of his child or the death of those dearest to him. Only in the attainment of such ἀπάθεια does happiness lie. Says Epictetus : " Externals are not within my power ; choice is. Where then shall I seek good and evil ? Why, within, in what is my own." [2] " If you wish good, get it from yourself." [3] " For from within comes ruin, and from within comes help." [4] Hence too the stress laid upon the duty of constant self-examination. " Never let sleep come to thy languid eyes e'er thou hast considered each act of the day . . . and then chide thyself for thy shameful acts, rejoice over thy good " ; thus again Epictetus, quoting lines which he attributes to Pythagoras.[5] And the only judge of what is shameful and what is good is the inner light of conscience, " the Holy Spirit within us." Indeed, conscience and duty may be said to be the twin corner-stones of Stoic ethics. Paul speaks as a Stoic when he com-

[1] *Diog. Laert.*, vii, 1, 53.
[2] See *D.*, i, 1 ; ii, 5, 13, etc.
[3] *D.*, i, 29.
[4] *D.*, iv, 9.
[5] *D.*, iii, 10.

pares life to a fight to be fought or a race to be run. Life as military service is a favourite metaphor; to each man, as in an army, a special duty is assigned, and he must go into training that he may be fit to face whatever life may bring. Above all, to the soldier it does not matter whether on his particular part of the field there is victory or defeat: what does matter is that he should obey the orders of conscience and do his best.

(*e*) *Social Ethics.*

While the Stoic's ethics in general tend to make him self-sufficient and independent of all things external, yet his social ethics aim at cultivating those duties which arise out of his relation to that larger whole of which he is a part, and by performance of which he will qualify as a good citizen of the world. "You must live for others," says Seneca, "if you wish to live for yourself."[1] For, self-sufficient as he was, the Stoic yet felt himself a part of the universal whole and akin by nature to all rational beings. This kinship to humanity transcends any mere national ties, so that the Stoic becomes the prophet of cosmopolitanism. Two states are to be distinguished, that to which a man belongs by birth and "that true commonwealth where dwell both gods and men", so that Marcus Aurelius can declare: "To me as Antonius my city is Rome, but as a man it is the universe."[2] Moreover, as in each man alike there is a fragment of the divine, all men are equal and distinctions of rank are of no account. True, the Stoic was practical enough to see that such equality

[1] *De otio*, XXX, 5. [2] vi, 44.

is only theoretical ; as Chrysippus puts it, nothing can prevent some seats in the theatre being better than others, and no more can all men have equal opportunities. Yet even as a theory the doctrine of man's equality is one of the chief bequests of Stoicism to posterity. "All of us," says Seneca, "have the same origin, the same source ; no man is nobler than another except him who has a more upright character and one better fitted to honourable pursuits." [1] It has often been noted as typical that the two most significant figures of second century Stoicism are Epictetus the slave and Marcus Aurelius the Emperor. When Paul writes such passages as Gal. iii, 28, or Col. iii, 11, it must be confessed that his spirit is more akin to the Stoic gospel of universal humanity than to the narrow Jewish provincialism of his fellow-apostles : "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

(*f*) *The Stoic Sage.*

The Stoic ideal may be summed up in the picture of the perfect sage, who is thus described by Cicero : "Dignified, magnificent, consistent, since reason declares that moral good is the only good, he alone must be happy ; . . . rightly will all things be said to be his who alone knows their use ; rightly too will he be styled beautiful, since the lineaments of the soul are more beautiful than those of the body ; rightly is he alone free, under the domination of no one and obeying no appetite ; rightly is he invincible whose body may be fettered but whose soul is not to be

[1] *De Ben.*, iii, 28.

enchained." [1] In his quest after such an ideal the seeker is bidden select some noble character—a Socrates, a Cato, a Scipio—as his mentor : "We ought to choose some good man," says Seneca, "and always have him before our eyes, that we may live as if he watched us, and do everything as if he saw." [2] Yet, practical as ever, he is under no illusion as to the impossibility of attaining to the ideal : "Enough for me to take away daily something from my faults and daily to reject my errors." [3] It is easy to see under what a disadvantage Stoicism laboured that it could not point to its ideal incarnate, as could Christianity in the historical Jesus. When the Stoic could only ask despairingly, "Where is he to be found whom we have sought so many ages ?" [4] the Christian could point to "the Logos made flesh".

Even though many of our illustrations have been drawn from post-Christian writers, it may be fairly claimed that they do no more than bring to its richest expression the Stoicism in the midst of which Gentile Christianity took its rise ; and we have dealt at greater length with the ideals of this school, because they awaken so many echoes in the pages of the New Testament. No less than the influence of Platonism on Christian theology has been that of Stoicism on Christian ethics. Yet we must never overlook a fundamental difference between Stoicism and Christianity, both in motive and in their view of the mutual relation of man to man. Stoicism is essentially self-centred and its aim is self-sufficiency, while the driving force of Christianity is self-sacrifice. As Bevan admirably puts it : "I think it is important

[1] *Cic., De Fin.*, iii, 22, 75.
[2] *Ep.*, ii, 8.
[3] *De Vita Beata*, 17.
[4] Seneca, *De Tranqu.*, vii, 4.

to realize that mankind has two different ideals before it ; and I do not see how the ideal of Detachment is compatible with the ideal of Love."[1]

V. *The Epicurean School*

The rival school of the Epicureans may be dealt with much more briefly, for its influence on the world in general and Christianity in particular was far less. Like the Stoics, Epicurus, who was born in Samos in 341 B.C., renounced the world with all its conventions and passions and inequalities ; but while the Stoic preached that even in a cruel and wicked world man can by strength of will be virtuous, Epicurus insisted that he can even be happy. The secret is to cease torturing oneself with illusory hopes and phantom fears ; and first one must be rid of the dread of this world, which after all is merely a machine, neither made nor guided by divine design but merely by certain mechanical principles. To this end Epicurus revived the physical theory of Democritus, according to which the world was formed by the clashing of atoms as they fall in a ceaseless rain through the void. Furthermore, by giving to the atoms a rudimentary power of movement, which enabled them to swerve and thereby clash, he attained a two-fold object : he both left room for Free Will, and he could also dispense with the idea of divine assistance at the creation. Not even mind or reason is required as a causative force, for all is the result of a purely mechanical process. He thus claimed to set men free from the shackles of fatalism, and above all to deliver them, as Lucretius puts it, from the "burden of

[1] Bevan, *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 69.

religion". Yet Epicurus did not deny the existence of gods, if only because he clung to the dream that somewhere there must exist beings who embodied that ideal of happiness which he could not find on earth. But if they do exist, they neither care for man nor concern themselves with this world, but live in the bliss of complete freedom from disturbance by mundane affairs; and in a similar *ataraxia* or "undisturbedness" or freedom from worry man will find the happiness which he seeks. Though Epicurus frankly taught that happiness or pleasure (he loves the word ἡδονή, "sweetness") is the goal of human effort and desire, he cannot fairly be accused of "hedonism": the active pursuit of pleasure as an end in itself, especially of sensual pleasure, will rob the soul of its perfect repose. Let a man rather conquer his fears and his restlessness, and the essential "sweetness" of life will inevitably reveal itself. Thus the Epicurean ideal is a passive rather than an active pleasure, freedom from passion, desire, pain rather than positive happiness and fullness of life. Indeed it is a not unfair reproach against the school that, while the Stoic bade man be of good cheer and overcome the world, the Epicurean preached a mere doctrine of escape.[1] So positive a faith as Christianity was not likely to owe much to so nerveless a philosophy.

In earlier days Greek philosophy had sought to divorce itself from religion, but by the New Testament era it was seeking increasingly to renew the alliance. The teaching of every school had become centrally moral and religious; whatever concessions might

[1] "The best that Epicurus has really to say of the world is that if you are very wise and do not attract its notice—λάθε βιώσας—it will not hurt you" (Gilbert Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 138).

be made to popular polytheism, the greater systems all agreed in regarding the Divine as one; and, whether it be Plato stressing the transcendence of God or the Stoics His immanence, each school was contributing to the development of a rounded theology. In the matter of ethics again the various systems agreed that a man's own personality is his one inalienable possession, and that moral responsibility rests upon the individual—doctrines entirely consonant with the Christian ethic. But philosophy alone was not enough. If the most priceless gift of Greek religious genius to the race is its confidence that human reason can by seeking find out even God, its most obvious weakness is its neglect of the converse truth that God is ever actively seeking and finding man. For by philosophy alone, even by the practice of "virtue" under the direction of "reason" and the control of the will, man can never attain his quest. Even the Stoic in the end admitted it: "No man," says Seneca, "is good without God. Can anyone rise superior to fortune save with God's help?"[1]

[1] *Ep.*, xli, 2.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL THOUGHT AND INSTITUTIONS

For an adequate estimate of early Gentile Christianity it is essential to have some understanding of the social conditions of the Hellenistic world in which it took its rise. Here space allows us merely to glance at such aspects of the picture as are most clearly reflected in the pages of the New Testament, and we must content ourselves with a few general observations.

I. *Social Morality in General*

Hellenistic social institutions, like early Greek religion, had their roots in the city-state, the individual being strictly subordinated to the body-politic, and ethics, as we have seen, being considered merely as a branch of politics. The disintegration of the city-state system made the centuries from Alexander to Christ an extremely critical period in the history of social morality. Social and ethical stability can hardly be looked for in an age when every established institution was being flung into the melting-pot, when the whole world was plagued with intermittent war and was experiencing the economic consequences always resulting from war—general political confusion, the breaking-up of home ties, the impoverishment of the masses and the accumulation of colossal wealth in the hands of the few, the virtual disappearance of

the middle classes, always the most stable factor in any society, and a vast growth of the slave population, the devastation of the rural areas and the drift of population to the cities, where they were increasingly subject to every kind of degrading social influence, of which the stage and the amphitheatre were perhaps the worst. Under such conditions it is not surprising that the social picture seems predominantly dark. But it is easy to paint it unduly black. Unfortunately we owe most of our notions of pagan society to satirists, whose chief aim was to pillory the vice of the day. Brilliant artists though they were, a Menander, a Petronius, or a Juvenal paints only one small section of a large community, and to accept their verdict as applicable to the whole of pagan society would be no more fair than to brand the whole of modern society on the strength of the lurid details of underworld and divorce court written up by our own sensational press. One does not forget that Paul too, who probably knew the Hellenistic world as well as any man of his day, and much better than any modern expert, draws a fearful picture of pagan vice in his letter to the Romans (i, 21 ff.). But there was a brighter side also, and it is only fair to realize that Christianity regenerated large blocks of pagan society, not because it had a monopoly of healthy influence in a completely vicious world, but because it rallied to itself and charged with new power not a few influences which were already quickening the age in its quest for a better social order. The way for the social message of Christianity, as for its religious gospel, was not wholly unprepared.

II. *Woman and the Home*

In any age social morality depends largely on the ideal of the home, and this in turn on the position given to women. Nowhere else does the Jew appear to greater advantage when compared with his pagan neighbours. The Greek in general had little enthusiasm for home life, and his low ideal of womanhood and of sex relations generally appears in Demosthenes' brutally frank summary: "We have *hetairai* for our pleasure, concubines for the ordinary requirements of the body, wives for the procreation of lawful issue and as confidential domestic guardians." In Greek society of classical times the position of woman both legally and socially was wholly inferior; she had no independent status, and was regarded at best as the necessary instrument for the maintenance of the family line, and at worst as the mere plaything of the lordly male. But even so her actual position was probably considerably higher than her legal status would seem to imply. In Macedonia women enjoyed a much larger measure of emancipation, perhaps because there survived under the more primitive conditions something of the older Homeric social ideal. The Macedonian dynasties produced an extraordinary succession of able and masterful women —Olympias, Arsinoe, Berenice, Cleopatra, to mention but a few—and from the royal courts a relative freedom for women seems to have broadened down to the Macedonian home, and to have extended in some measure throughout the Macedonian empires. The increasing amount of freedom given to women in Hellenistic social life was also due to the growing recognition of the value of the individual, and above

all to the teaching of Stoicism, which did much to point the way towards equality of status for woman, and to inspire a nobler conception of marriage, particularly at Rome. Here the position of woman was always better than in the Greek world. The Roman husband had an equally despotic power over his wife, but he more readily found in her the companionship for which the Greek too often turned to the *hetaira*. At Rome too marriage was protected by all the sanctions of religion, as it never was in Greece. True, divorce was appallingly common, for a wife might be put away on the slightest excuse. Nevertheless, such evidence as Pliny's letters to his wife Calpurnia, or Plutarch's words of comfort to his Timoxena, remind us that genuine domestic happiness, and the social virtues which are its necessary condition, were perhaps no less common in the first century than in the twentieth. It is, however, certainly true that the influences which were already working for the gradual emancipation of women affected only a small minority, and that all through our period, as Tarn puts it,[1] " freedom was not automatic, but had to be grasped." Woman could never come to her own in an age which in matters of sexual morality was notoriously lax beyond most ages, even though it be admitted that in no age has purity in this respect been practised by more than a lamentably small minority of society. The Stoics no doubt preached a single standard of chastity for man and woman alike ; but the Christian crusade for absolute sexual purity was something new and strange according to contemporary standards. This

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

both explains and justifies what may sometimes appear an exaggerated emphasis in the New Testament.

The attitude of a community to its children is another fair index to social morality, and equally abhorrent to the Christian conscience was the quite general practice of infanticide and child exposure. Children were esteemed mainly for their utilitarian value, not loved for their own sake. In Greece, where the population was deliberately limited, few families raised more than two sons and at most a single daughter,[1] while at Rome an ancient law required parents to rear all males and the first daughter, but allowed the destruction or exposure of all deformed infants. But the law was apparently more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and in Rome as throughout the Hellenistic world both abortion and infanticide, especially of girls, was practised on an appalling scale. One of the most pathetic relics of antiquity is the letter found in Egypt in which Hilarion writes home to his wife Alis, who is about to become a mother, bidding her destroy the child at birth if it is a girl. How revolutionary to the pagan world must have seemed the infinite value placed by Jesus on the " little ones ".

III. *Slavery*

Hellenistic society rested upon a radically unsound basis—slavery. Yet so universal was the institution that, as early Christianity wisely saw, it could not be hastily abolished without reducing society itself to chaos. According to Gibbon there were as many slaves as free men in Rome in the time of Claudius,

[1] See Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

and it has been reckoned that there were well over half a million slaves in the city at the date of Jesus's birth. The proportion of the slave population to the free for Italy as a whole has even been put as high as three to one. In the Greek world ordinary domestic slavery was often not unkindly, particularly at Athens, where slaves had the right of asylum from brutal masters. They were often better educated than the free classes, and more than one or two became world-famous philosophers. But industrial slavery in the mines or on the land might be a hell on earth. In Rome the slave ranked not as a *persona* but as a *res*, had no rights and no protection from a master's cruelty, could give evidence only under torture, and was liable to death at the master's slightest whim. The rapid growth of the slave population, as the result of the constant wars waged first by the Macedonian dynasties and later by the Romans, had disastrous effects both economic and moral. Economically it degraded free labour by branding many types of employment as beneath a freeman, and thereby encouraged that aversion from honest toil for wages to which the Greek at all times and the later Roman were all too prone. The Jew is an exception that he counted toil honourable in all men. It is only after the time of Augustus, when wars beyond the frontier became less frequent and the slave supply in consequence less plentiful, that we notice a revival of "pride in honest industry" which is "a new and healthy sign, as a reaction from the contempt for it which is always congenial to an aristocratic caste supported by slave labour".[1] Even worse were the moral results of slavery, ranging from a ridiculous

[1] Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 253.

dependence on servants[1] to the brutalizing effect of irresponsible power—reaching its climax in the orgies of the amphitheatre—and the unrestrained lust of master at the expense of his younger female slaves. By the close of our period the spread of the Stoic ideal of the brotherhood of man was working towards a better treatment of slaves. Manumission was becoming increasingly common, and the slave who by grace of his master had been allowed a *peculium* or personal "savings-account" might use it to purchase his freedom. Particularly interesting in the light of Paul's allusions was the custom, probably originating under the influence of Delphi about 200 B.C., whereby the slave might buy his freedom by means of a fictitious sale of himself to a god. "The owner comes with the slave to the temple, sells him there to the god, and receives from the temple treasury the purchase money which the slave has before paid in out of his savings. By this means the slave becomes the property of the god, but as against men he is free."[2] "Ye are not your own," writes the Apostle; "ye are bought with a price."

IV. *Clubs and Trade Guilds*

It has been remarked by Dill that "probably no age, not even our own, ever felt a greater craving for some form of social life wider than the family and narrower than the state".[3] Hence a most

[1] "A Roman noble," says Seneca, "needs to be assured by a slave that he is really seated before he feels comfortable in his chair" (*De. brev. vit.*, 12, 6).

[2] Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 173.

[3] Dill, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

significant feature of the period, the rise of various private and semi-private associations or clubs or trade-guilds.[1] The earliest of such clubs appear in fourth century Athens, but it was only after 300 that they began rapidly to propagate themselves all over the Hellenistic world. As a rule they were entirely unpolitical and often had a religious basis, being grouped around the worship of some particular god. One would guess that the *thyasoi* were more purely religious associations, while the *eranoi*, where more emphasis was put upon subscriptions and common funds, were primarily social. We should probably be wrong in regarding either as "friendly societies", though they might help a member in trouble, often by paying for his funeral. The idea of charitable relief was alien from their purpose, which was social rather than economic. As Tertullian fairly argues, the common funds of the Christian Church, used for the aid of needy brethren, are something quite different from those of such pagan fraternities. Nor were they at all comparable to modern "trade unions" organized for concerted action on the part of workers.[2] Even the Roman *collegia*, the membership of which might often be restricted to those practising a particular trade, were social rather than economic associations, where in the

[1] "The occasions for their organization," writes W. S. Ferguson, "were almost infinitely diverse—the promotion of the lyric and dramatic arts, of new religious cults, of conviviality and mutual support among co-nationals when living abroad, among soldiers in garrison and other professional groups, among class-mates in the gymnasium, or simply among friends or neighbours" (*Cambridge Ancient History*, vii, 34).

[2] "The professional trade guild was practically unknown to Hellenism, unless in Egypt; true trade guilds only evolved under the Roman Empire" (Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 87).

membership of a group the humble individual might find an outlet for repressed social instincts, enjoy the stimulus of like-minded folk, and attain to the dignity of self-expression and self-respect. For within the club social distinctions counted for nothing ; free-born and slave had an equal chance to rise to seniority in the society ; the clubs were often the natural venue for a foreigner entering the city, and thus served to break down even racial barriers.

Of special interest for our purpose are the various Mystery fraternities, organized under the patronage of this or that cult-god, for it is generally admitted that, together with the synagogue, they served as model for the early Gentile Christian house-churches. Indeed, as such pagan guilds would be particularly numerous in the great Pauline mission centres, and most of the converts were drawn from pagan circles, it would be only natural if the organization of the guild-system was largely carried over into the church. Converts may even have claimed for the new Christian groups the privileges and protection which they had formerly enjoyed as members of legalized guilds, thus escaping interference on the part of watchful Roman authorities. It has been pointed out that in the Corinthian church, for example, while some features characteristic of the synagogue appear to be missing —a college of elders, the reading of the law and the prophets at worship, the jurisdiction of the church herself over her members, who on the contrary betake themselves to pagan courts—there are striking analogies with the customs in vogue in the pagan *thyasoi* : there is the welcome given to the poor and needy, the practice of a measure of communism, the observance of a common meal. We note too the same

dangerous tendency in the church as in the clubs to split up into competing cliques under rival leaders—"I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas." There is doubtless much that is true and important in all this, though it is easy to overstrain the analogy. And there is this great difference. While the various small Christian communities felt themselves closely interrelated as but local branches of the one "body of Christ", the *thyasoi* or *collegia*, with the one possible exception of the guild of Dionysiac artists which seems to have had affiliated branches throughout the Empire, were all purely local. Above all, as Professor E. F. Scott remarks, even in its social and charitable organization "the Church borrowed nothing from the pagan associations except the mechanism for mutual helpfulness. The idea which it sought to put into action was part of its *Christian* inheritance".[1] "A *new* commandment I give unto you," said Jesus, "that ye love one another, as I have loved you."

V. *Internationalism*

Throughout the Hellenistic age one may trace a gradual but persistent advance towards the international spirit, which reached its climax in the golden days of the empire, when Rome by her administration fused and united severed races, and brought East and West nearer to a mutual understanding than at any time since. The Greek could never entirely sever himself from loyalty to the small city-state, even in its downfall; yet he too, through the world-wide

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Gospel and its Tributaries*, p. 94.

spread of his language and culture, was ironically enough the greatest of all apostles of cosmopolitanism. Even within the narrow boundaries of Greece proper a certain enlargement of the feeling of humanity beyond the limits of *polis* patriotism shows itself in the growth of arbitration between states, and in an honest effort to humanize war by mitigating the penalties inflicted upon the non-combatant population of a defeated city. Under the influence of Delphi and the Amphictyons some approach to international, or rather inter-state, collaboration appears in the movement to secure for some holy places neutrality and immunity in time of war. Indeed in these ancient "amphictyonies" or voluntary organizations of cities centring in some outstanding shrine—first Delos and then Delphi were the most famous—one might almost seek the germ of the "League of Nations" idea. A similar tendency appears in the custom of one city conferring honorary or potential citizenship upon friendly individuals in a neighbouring city, or even upon the whole citizen body, whereby such *proxenoi* might become actual citizens and exercise their rights as such, if at any time they migrated to the city conferring the privilege. Equally interesting is the practice whereby a city would invite a judicial commission from a neutral neighbour not only to arbitrate a political quarrel with another city, but even to settle domestic lawsuits within the city itself. As such *dicasts* were necessarily experts in the laws of many cities besides their own, it is not unreasonable to see here the germ of the later idea of a "law of nations". All these things drew city closer to city, so that Poseidippus can say in the third century, "There are many cities, but they are one

Hellas "[1]; and when the Greek in the wake of Alexander spread himself over the world, he carried with him, in spite of his instinctive suspicion both of federation and of empire, the seeds of this healthy internationalism. As we have seen, they were richly nourished by the spread of those Stoic ideas of humanity and brotherhood which found their earliest expression in Zeno's "Republic", where we glimpse "a resplendent hope which has never quite left men since".[2]

VI. *Trade and Travel*

Hardly anything was of more importance for the spread of early Christianity than the ease of intercommunication which resulted from the establishment of the *Pax Romana* over the whole Hellenistic world. This was essentially a travelling age, and the constant circulation of men and ideas throughout the arteries of a vast empire first unified the missionary field, and then enabled the new Gospel to spread throughout it with an ease and rapidity which would have been otherwise impossible. The same great trade routes had, of course, been followed for many centuries before Rome became mistress. Deissmann remarks that nearly all the important places visited by Paul are still to be found upon the main lines of modern communications, and may be reached by either

[1] Quoted by Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[2] "He dreamt of a world which should no longer be separate states, but one great City under one divine law, where all were citizens and members one of another, bound together not by human laws, but by their own willing consent, or (as he phrased it) by Love. . . . Even the practical world was influenced, in spite of itself, by Zeno's dream" (Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 73 f.).

rail or steamer, which is but another way of saying that ancient and modern routes by water and land alike are essentially the same.[1] Both Persian and Greek in turn had played their part in marking out and maintaining the great main roads, but it was Rome that completed the work. By the time of Christ the Empire was the world, and from end to end it was linked up by a network of roads engineered with such skill that many of them have defied the ravages of nearly two thousand years. Built in the first instance for military purposes, they served a happier use in speeding the peaceful traveller on his way, and were the greatest of all factors in the creation of a composite but essentially single civilization, which was the prime condition for the spread of a universal faith. In Paul's day the normal rate of travel by land would probably be from thirty to fifty miles a day, and Augustus for official business had established a post, modelled on the earlier Persian relay system, which maintained a very much higher speed. Travel by sea followed recognized routes mapped out by Phœnician and Greek centuries before the Romans appeared upon the scene. During the greater part of our period privateering and piracy had been the bane of trader and traveller alike, but after the suppression of the pirates by Pompey in 67 B.C. the Mediterranean enjoyed some three hundred years of comparative immunity. "*Pacatum volitant per mare navitae*," boasts Horace,[2] and it is probably true that during the first two Christian centuries one could travel throughout the Mediterranean world both by land and sea more safely and over a wider area than was

[1] Deissmann, *Paul*, p. 228 f.
[2] *C.*, iv, 5, 19.

ever again possible till our own day. The Empire of this period was a widely-travelled society, and the upper classes, both on duty and on pleasure bent, probably wandered abroad hardly less than our own. But for the circulation of new ideas, much more important than the pleasure travelling of the rich would be the travelling for trade purposes of the middle classes, and the transporting of the lower classes here and there as slaves and for military service. The influence of slaves, and later on of soldiers, in the spreading of the gospel must have been enormous. Nor must we forget the many who travelled for educational purposes. The scholar would wander from university to university—Athens, Rhodes, Alexandria, Rome, while itinerant teachers had always been familiar in the Hellenistic world as they travelled hither and thither both to learn and to disseminate their learning. Paul, the wandering missionary and preacher of a new gospel, would be no strange figure in the market-place of Athens or the temple precincts of Ephesus ; and after his day this ease of communication, and the constant contacts of individuals from various widely separated Christian communities, greatly facilitated the enlargement and consolidation of the Christian Church. That the Christians themselves clearly recognized the debt which their faith owed to the *Pax Romana* is clear from the words of Irenæus, " The Romans have given the world peace, and we travel without fear along the roads and across the sea wherever we will." [1]

[1] *Adv. Haer.*, iv, 30, 3.

SECTION II

MOVEMENTS AND INFLUENCES IN HELLENISM

CHAPTER FIVE

THE MYSTERY RELIGIONS

Our actual knowledge of the Hellenistic Mystery Religions is very much less than might be supposed from the vast number of books written about them. This is due partly to the vow of secrecy imposed upon all initiates, which was surprisingly well kept, and partly to the fact that even the scanty remains which are extant can be used only with extreme caution, for it is almost impossible to fix dates with any certainty; even the *Corpus Hermeticum*, our chief source for the knowledge of the syncretistic mysticism of the Hellenistic world, contains elements dating from widely separated periods, and according to Reitzenstein, perhaps our greatest authority, was brought together into a single compilation not much earlier than A.D. 300.

I. *Characteristics of the Mysteries*

Some account has already been given of the earlier Greek Mysteries, like those of Eleusis, which were officially recognized, and had their place in the religion of the State. From these it has been usual

to distinguish the independent and voluntary associations which at a later date spread from the East over the whole Hellenistic world. As a great deal has been made of the effect of these Oriental Mysteries upon Gentile Christianity, it is important to remember that, though in Egypt and the Asiatic provinces they had long flourished, in the Western Mediterranean area it was only *after* Christianity had obtained a firm foothold that the Mysteries began to have a vogue. Unjustifiable deductions concerning the origins of Christian doctrine and practice have often been made from evidence which is too late for the purpose. The truth is that the Oriental Mysteries were influential in modifying rather than in moulding the original form of Christian thought and institutions.

The most important of these Mysteries were those of Cybele the Great Mother of the Gods and Attis, of the Egyptian Queen Isis and the Lord Sarapis,[1] the cult of the Syrian Baals and Adonis, of the Phrygian Sabazios, and of the Persian Mithra. The rapid spread of these Oriental cults is easily understandable. As distinguished from the purely Greek Dionysiac and Eleusinian Mysteries, these cults were aggressively propagandist and recruited converts from every source ; as they were originally foreign to the Græco-Roman world, they had all the glamour which hoary antiquity, an exotic origin, and a sensuous ceremonial seem to give to a religion ; unlike the city-state cults their horizon was not restricted to one particular community or even one race ; their claims were cosmopolitan and universal,

[1] Sarapis was a deliberate creation of Ptolemy I, representing Osiris in his Apis form, and was intended to unite Greeks and Egyptians in a common worship.

and they had an irresistible appeal to an age when religion had become both denationalized and individualized, and a man was no longer born into a national cult but freely chose his own patron god. Above all they offered relief to men from all those religious complexes of which the age was peculiarly conscious—escape through emotion and ecstasy from the burden of matter and the evils of dualism, from bondage to demons through union with a god who was Lord of the demons, from the sense of imprisonment through the ascent of the soul along the pathway of the stars, from the dread of death through sacraments guaranteeing rebirth and immortality.

The general characteristics of a Mystery Religion are thus defined by one of our leading authorities: "The Mysteries presented immense variety both in detail and in outlook, but may be brought under a common denominator in their agreement on the view of man as having a divine element from a higher world imprisoned within, which must be released to ascend to its heavenly source, on the necessity of solemn initiation for salvation, the need of cathartic rites to wash away sin, the impartation of sacramental grace, the participation in a repetition of the experience of the Deity, the uplift of communion or even identification with the Deity, the sure promise of immortality to the members of their religious fraternities, contrasted with the sad destiny awaiting those who neglected to avail themselves of their salutary sacraments."[1] Yet it is a question how far one may speak of the Mystery Religions as a single whole. There were of course as many sectional and "denominational" differences as in Christendom, where the Roman

[1] Angus, *Religious Quests of the Græco-Roman World*, p. 76.

Catholic Church, the Greek Church, Presbyterians, and the Society of Friends share all an equal claim to the title "Christian". Yet there was a spirit of mutual toleration and inclusiveness, which appears in the common practice of initiation into several cults —"to make assurance double sure"—and in the claim made by each cult that its particular deity was but a special form of the one great God of nature. Formulae such as "*Hermes omnia solus et ter unus*" and "*Isis una quae es omnia*" are characteristic of the age.[1] No doubt each would boast that it alone could reveal the truly authentic form of deity, and that others merely worshipped its god under other names, as when Isis declares, "the whole earth worships my godhead, one and individual, under many a changing shape, with varied rites and by many divine names; there the Phrygians, first-born of men, call me Mother of the Gods that dwells at Pessinus . . ."—and so on through the catalogue of cults which thus ends, "the Egyptians, mighty in ancient lore, honour me with my peculiar rites and call me by my true name, Isis the Queen."[2] But there was no inclination to question the validity of other cults, which were rivals rather than enemies. "I think," said Celsus, "that it makes no difference whether you call the highest Being Zeus, or Zen, or Adonis, or Sabaoth, or Ammoun like the Egyptians, or Poppæus like the Scythians."[3] There can be no question that the Mystery Religions helped to blaze the trail from polytheism through syncretism to a true monotheistic basis for a future universal religion.

[1] See Reitzenstein, *Hell. Myst. Rel.*, pp.15 ff.
[2] Apuleius, *Met.*, xi, 5
[3] Origen, *c. Celsus*, v, 41.

Beneath an infinite variety of detail the Mysteries closely resembled one another both in ritual and in the legendary beliefs which the rites symbolized. Derived as they all were from a primitive nature worship, they centred on the cult of a deity, originally the symbol of reviving vegetation, who had died and been restored to life. Unlike the God of Greek philosophy, or even the God of Old Testament Jewish thought, the Mystery divinities were thought of as suffering and as entering into fellowship with man in a *sumpatheia*. In the Attis-Adonis rites described by Firmicus Maternus [1] the worshippers first lament passionately over the death of their god, and then break forth into ecstatic rejoicing as the priests proclaim the glad news of his resurrection : " Take heart, ye initiates, for the god is saved ; for he shall be a salvation to you from evil." The essence of the mystery-creed is that the promise of rebirth, set forth in nature and symbolized in the drama of the dying god, is applied to the religious experience of the individual worshipper, so that the rising of the god becomes the guarantee of his own resurrection, provided that through initiation he makes himself one with the god in his dying and rising. Hence the regularity with which initiation is spoken of under the terms of death and rebirth. Firmicus Maternus calls the candidate for initiation *homo moriturus*, " a man about to die." Conversely, in a passage generally ascribed to Plutarch it is claimed that the soul at death " undergoes such an experience as those do who are initiated into great mysteries. Thus death and initiation closely correspond, word to word (i.e. τελευτᾶν and τελεῖσθαι) and thing

[1] *De err. prof. rel.*, xxii.

to thing ".[1] "At first there are . . . journeyings through the dark, full of misgivings. . . . After this a wonderful light . . . and the majesty of holy sounds and sacred visions." This doctrine of a death to the old life and a "rebirth to eternity" is cardinal to the Mysteries and the most startling parallel to Pauline doctrine. To multitudes whom the arguments of the philosophers left cold it brought a new hope of life and immortality. "Beautiful truly is the Mystery given us by the blessed Gods," confesses an Eleusinian hierophant; "death is for us mortals no longer a bane but a blessing." And even Cicero acknowledges that the Mysteries have given "not only good cause why we should live joyously, but also a better hope in death."[2]

II. *The Cult of Isis*

The two cults about which we know most are those of the Egyptian Isis and of the Persian Mithra. With Isis was associated in a triad of worship Sarapis, the creation of Ptolemy I and "the only god ever successfully made by a modern man",[3] and Anubis the dog-headed god who conducted souls to the realm of immortal life. But "Isis of the myriad names" always overshadowed her consort, and was probably the most important of all Hellenistic divinities, being identified with practically every known goddess, and claiming to be the one divine substance of which all others were but shadows.

[1] Stobæus, *Florilegium*, 120, 28. For a translation of the whole passage see Prickard, *Selected Essays of Plutarch*, p. 215.

[2] Quoted by Angus, *Religious Quests*, etc., p. 90.

[3] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

She was portrayed in sculpture as a youthful matron of kindly mien, modestly robed and crowned with the lotus or with the crescent moon. Sometimes in her arms she carried the babe Horus. She was pre-eminently the woman's goddess, and appealed to the universal wife and mother in woman, as neither the warrior Athene nor the virgin-huntress Artemis ever did or could. In her woman found one who had suffered like her and could meet her needs. The "glory of women" she is called and one who bestows upon them "equal power with men".[1] It is hardly deniable that, even after Christianity had ousted all the other Mystery gods from their thrones, Isis lingered on, and her devotees readily found her counterpart in the cult of the Virgin. The very statues of Isis and Horus are known to have been utilized as images of the Madonna and Child.[2]

We are fortunate to possess in the XIth Book of the Metamorphoses of Apuleius (written in the middle of the second century A.D., but plainly reflecting a ritual dating from a very much earlier time) a vivid account of the various stages of initiation in the Isis cult, a brief summary of which follows, the quotations being from H. E. Butler's translation. Lucius, the hero of the romance, after a series of tragic-comical adventures, takes up residence in the temple among the priests of the goddess. There he sees visions in which he is bidden to serve the goddess, but is also warned that only those may offer themselves for "enrolment in the sacred soldiery" who are conscious of divine vocation: "There are none of all the priests of Isis so abandoned in spirit or so given

[1] *P. Oxy.*, 1380.

[2] See references in Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

over to death as to venture rashly and sacrilegiously to undertake the service of the goddess without her express command." Being ready at last for initiation Lucius is first baptized—" after he had first prayed to the gods to be gracious to me, the priest besprinkled me with purest water and cleansed me "—and then returns to the temple, where at the feet of the goddess he learns secrets which must not be revealed. Ten days later the initiation proper takes place. After first receiving the greetings of the whole brotherhood —" on all sides crowds of holy initiates flocked around me, each after the ancient rite honouring me with divine gifts "—he is led into the very holy of holies and sees " unspeakable things ". " I drew nigh to the confines of death, and having trodden the threshold of Proserpine I was borne through all the elements and returned to earth again ; I saw the sun gleaming with bright splendour at dead of night ; I approached the gods above and the gods below, and worshipped them face to face. Behold I have told thee things of which, though thou hast heard them, thou must yet know naught." So well has the pledge of secrecy been kept that we have only the vaguest idea of what actually happened at the crisis of initiation. But it is clear enough that the candidate was first put through a series of terrifying experiences, and that afterwards, by some means that we cannot discover, either by inducing trance or by sheer illusion, a vision of the cult deities was granted. The preliminary shocks seem to have included a view of the Lower World, while the reference to being " borne through all the elements " is probably an allusion to the astral theory of the ascent of the soul through the planetary spheres, a return of the soul to its true abode which may even

have been dramatically enacted. On the morning after initiation there took place what was technically known as the "enthronement" of the initiate, and Lucius, arrayed in the mystic robe with crown of palms on his head and flaming torch in his hand, is "set up like to the image of a god" and revealed to the worshippers side by side with the image of the goddess. Thus is symbolized the central truth that the initiate has become one with the deity and is himself divine. Finally, after several more days spent in "the ineffable delight of dwelling with the image of the goddess", Lucius departs for home, first uttering this prayer of thanksgiving and dedication: "My voice is too poor in utterance to tell what I feel concerning thy majesty. Nay, had I a thousand mouths, a thousand tongues, and everlasting continuance of unwearied speech, it would be all too little. Therefore will I strive to do all that a poor yet faithful servant may. I will guard the memory of thy divine countenance and of thy most holy godhead deep hidden within my heart's inmost shrine, and their image shall be with me for ever."

III. *Mithraism*

In the New Testament period the cult of Mithra, according to Cumont, "did not possess any importance," but in the second century it has appeared to many as Christianity's most serious rival.[1] This is perhaps an exaggeration, for it is probable that the

[1] "On peut dire que, si le Christianisme eût été arrêté dans sa croissance par quelque maladie mortelle, le monde eût été Mithraiste" (Renan, *Marc-Aurèle, Histoire des origines du Christianisme*, vol. vii, p. 579).

cults both of Isis and of the Great Mother would appear even more influential, were it not that the close resemblance between Christian and Mithraic ritual, and the violent attacks of the Apologists upon the latter as diabolic parodies of the Christian sacraments, have given the Mithra-cult an undue prominence. But if not actually the strongest, it was undeniably the noblest of Christianity's competitors. In the Vedas Mithra is invoked as a god of light inferior in station to Ahura, and as such he readily found a place in Zoroastrianism, the dualistic religion of Persia, the central doctrine of which was the struggle of Ahura Mazda, Lord of Light and Goodness, with Ahriman, the Prince of Darkness and Evil. Here Mithra appears as the heavenly warrior championing the cause of Ahura Mazda, and his symbol is seen in the Unconquerable Sun. Under the Persian kings Mithraism was adopted as a royal religion,[1] and after the downfall of Persia it retained and even expanded its importance in the East. But the appearance of Mithra in the West is late ; there is no reference to him by Greek writers before Christian times, though he is said to have arrived in Italy with Pompey's pirate captives in 67 B.C. The golden days of the cult were towards the end of the second century A.D., when Commodus adopted it as an imperial religion, but during the third century its influence was definitely on the wane.

The ritual of Mithra it is impossible to reconstruct, for too high claims were almost certainly made by Dieterich for his famous *Mithras-Liturgie*. The

[1] "Solar monolatry is an admirable prop to the divinity of kings and well suits the political conditions of oriental despotism" (Halliday, *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*, p. 285).

central feature of the myth is the slaying by Mithra of the Bull, from whose blood, in spite of all the efforts of the powers of Ahriman, life miraculously sprang up over all the earth ; this was the motif of the decorations in the Mithraic chapels. Mithra himself was invoked as a mediator between God and man, the benefactor to whom the human race owes all its benefits, whose life was one of struggle—the struggle of light against darkness, God against the Devil, good against evil in men's hearts. In the visible world the Sun, Helios, is not identical with Mithra, but is the intermediary between Mithra and men, just as Mithra himself is mediator between men and God. As for man his soul is immortal, having descended at birth from its eternal home of light. During life Mithra stands by the believer in his fight for the good, and at death he is the arbiter on whose judgment depends whether or no the soul may once again ascend through the seven planetary spheres to the realm of light and bliss.

It is probable that the dramatization of this descent and ascent of the soul was a prominent part of the initiation ceremony. Other notable features of the cult were the numerous local and apparently independent brotherhoods, each with its chapel or " Mithræon " ; the emphasis on the idea of enrolment in the army of God, which found expression in the *sacramentum* or military oath of loyalty to the God's service, an oath which also implied a pledge to abstain from specified moral sins ; and, above all, those rites which seemed to reflect so closely the Christian sacraments that Christians did not hesitate to denounce them as Satanic parodies. These were the initiatory rite of baptism for the washing away of

sin, and the sacramental meal of bread and wine (or water), which was claimed to commemorate the last meal which Helios and Mithra took together upon earth. Finally must be mentioned the strange ritual of the *taurobolium* or baptism in bull's blood—apparently a survival of primitive Anatolian religion—the primary idea behind which seems to be the magical attainment of life, first through the sacrifice of the sacred animal, and then through the absorption by the worshipper of his life-force. It is curious that the efficacy of the rite was thought to last for twenty years, after which it had to be renewed, and this time apparently the initiate was finally " reborn into eternity ".

Mithraism was essentially a man's, and predominantly a soldier's religion, and it seems that women were debarred from initiation. It had all the moral strenuousness of a soldier's creed, and ethically was undoubtedly the highest of all the syncretistic cults. Its emphasis on the duty of an unremitting *militia dei* against the powers of evil, and upon the necessity of ἐγκράτεια or self-control, which in its appeal to the best in man is, as Halliday says, " so much stronger than mere ἄσκησις or the observance of rules and penances " [1] as enjoined by the other cults—all this reminds us sharply of Paul's own teaching, and permits us to see in the Mithra-cult, not indeed one of the influences moulding New Testament Christianity (its period of greatest influence is too late), but during the following three centuries a not unworthy rival.

[1] Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

IV. *Sacramentalism*

The outstanding feature of all the Mysteries is their highly developed sacramentalism, and they have interested students of early Christianity chiefly as one of the channels through which, it is alleged, a like sacramentalism early entered and dominated the Christian Church. In the Mysteries the line between sacrament and magic was very finely drawn, and it is in this respect that they are most clearly seen as aberrations from the authentic Greek tradition.[1] The trend appears in the belief that the virtue of a sacramental rite lies not so much in the religious experience symbolized as in the rite itself, and that the bestowal of divine grace is conditioned not by the spiritual receptivity of the participant but by the magical efficacy of an *opus operatum*. Faith, if demanded at all, appears merely as credulity in the efficacy of the rite. Yet it is well to remember that in the religious realism of the age the line of demarcation between "sign" and "thing signified" was never clearly drawn. The "symbol" *was* the "mystery", and the mystery was not conceivable without the symbol. It is significant that in the Early Church "*symbolum*" is used interchangeably with "*sacramentum*" as a synonym with "*mysterium*". The point is well taken by Pfleiderer[2]: "The contradiction, which our analytic thought is accustomed to find between the nature of an inner spiritual process and its mediation through an outward sensible act, has

[1] "Magic first returns when the genuine Greek spirit vanishes in the great transformation of philosophy and religion which began during the Hellenistic period" (Nilsson, *History of Greek Religion*, p. 52).

[2] *Primitive Christianity*, iv, p. 231.

for ancient thought in general, and the period of the Mysteries in particular, no existence. . . . Our difficulties on this point would have been quite unintelligible to the men of that time, for it appeared to them as self-evident that a real inward experience must also be visibly represented by a corresponding outward event, and that just in this mystic interplay of inward and outward consisted the significance of all cultus-ceremonies." Thus much in the Mysteries, not to speak the New Testament writings, which might appear as a materialistic or even semi-magical sacramentalism, may be due in part at least to inexactness of language and imperfection of psychological analysis.

V. *Religious and Ethical Value*

Such a reminder is necessary in any attempt to evaluate the Mystery-cults religiously. Had they any real religious effect? There is much, no doubt, in the extant descriptions which reads like nothing better than the flummery of a pantomime. Thus Plutarch speaks of "superstition and its ridiculous doings and emotions, words, gestures, juggleries, sorceries, coursings around, beatings of cymbals, purifications which are impure", and adds that such things tempt one to say that "better no Gods than Gods, if Gods accept such things and take pleasure in them"[1]. Yet we have on the other hand the quite obviously sincere testimony of initiates, which appears to reflect the personal enjoyment of religious experiences which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard". "O happy is he," cries Euripides, "to whom the blessedness

[1] *De Superstitione*, 12, 171B; Prickard, p. 234.

is given to know the mysteries of the gods, who is pure in his life, and keeps holy revel in his soul."[1] As Halliday well says, "If these religions were purely childish imposture, strange indeed it is that they should have succeeded in hoodwinking so vast an audience, and remarkable that the Fathers should have feared a competition so inept."[2] It is, of course, true that on many the effect of such a highly emotional type of religion must have been wholly bad, and this was realized by the devotees themselves. As Proclus puts it: "Nothing deters the vulgar from not suffering all kinds of distortions of these things and from misusing the benefits . . . whereby they are set aside from the gods and from the true holy worship, and are borne into the life of sensation and unreason."[3] But even Paul admits the same danger with reference to Christian *charismata*, and on the whole it is difficult to deny that many an initiate must have had a genuine psychological experience, which left upon him a genuinely religious effect.

As to the ethical value of the Mysteries, here too it is easy to be unfair. None will deny that the goal of communion with God was sought emotionally rather than ethically, and passionately emotional cults are seldom altogether successful in guiding emotion into ethical channels. Moral scandals were inevitable, and with regard to sexual morality in particular emotionalism as always was liable to lead to grave aberrations. Yet there have come down to us, even in the official rules of the cults, warnings against belief in the adequacy of magical rites apart from

[1] *Bacchae*, 73. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 266.
[3] *Comm. on Plato's Rep.*, quoted by Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

essential purity of heart. Even as early as the latter half of the fifth century B.C. the Mysteries had an ethical significance, as appears from the song of the initiates in Aristophanes' *Frogs* : " For we alone have a . . . holy light, we who are initiated and who live towards friends and strangers in dutiful and pious fashion." [1] To-day the majority opinion of competent scholars is that on the whole the balance of influence was almost certainly on the side of higher ethical standards.

VI. *Influence on Christianity*

As regards the direct bearing of the Mysteries upon Christianity, they would appear to be important rather as pioneers preparing the ground than as models determining the form which the new religion was to take ; for, as Wendland says, by liberating religion from nationalism and making it a matter of individual choice and experience " all the religions advancing from the orient rendered pioneering service to Christianity ".[2] Not only did they in part Orientalize the West and thereby make it hospitable to a Palestinian Gospel, but they also awakened profound religious aspirations which only Christianity could satisfy, and provided the new faith with a redemptive terminology which enabled it readily to make contact with the existing religious ideas of its converts. Some modern scholars, like Loisy, have ventured to say that " the Christianity which displaced the Mystery cults was also a Mystery, conceived in its general lines on the same model ".[3]

[1] *Frogs*, 454 ff. [2] *Hell.-Rom. Kultur*, p. 254.
[3] *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1911.

Striking resemblances there admittedly are, but they are in vocabulary and outward form rather than in essential thought and content. The Mysteries and Christianity, being products of the same age, were almost certain to use the same forms of expression. But there is no greater fallacy than to assume that because Christianity took over, or developed independently, a number of terms and rites familiar also to the Mysteries, the thought and experience symbolized in them are equally comparable to, and do not entirely transcend, the pagan analogy. Indeed, even in the matter of outward form the debt of Christianity is far more apparent than real. There are after all only a limited number of forms which ritual can take, and the fact that, e.g., Mithraism and Christianity both lay stress on baptism and a communal sacramental meal proves, not that one copied from the other, much less that there is any doctrinal correspondence, but merely that both belong approximately to the same age. Practically all ancient religions developed sacraments ; almost all also have the conception of some sort of divine Redeemer, union with whom is the aim of the cult. The only really distinctive conception in these cults, the counterpart of which in Christianity might seem something more than a coincidence, is the idea of dying and rising with the Saviour God. And within the New Testament it is only in the writings of Paul that this apparent analogy with pagan ideas is found. Paul was a missionary before he was a theologian, and he would welcome any analogy which might help to throw light on what for him was the central truth of the Gospel—the death and resurrection of Christ—and make it more intelligible to his converts.

Yet Weinel is undoubtedly right when he says that " Paul's doctrine of the Spirit and of Christ is not an imitation of mystery doctrine but inmost personal experience metaphysically interpreted after the manner of his time ". Above all, Christianity had the infinite advantage over the Mysteries of a real connection with history through the person of Jesus. Its " myth " and its " sacraments " had the background of historical reality, and its teaching a persuasiveness, which could come only through the concentration of Christian doctrine around a concrete personality of unrivalled moral power.

CHAPTER SIX

"PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS"

I. *Astralism*

In Chapter II something has already been said about the rise of astral religion as a manifestation of the "failure of nerve" which overtook Greek religion during the Hellenistic age. A somewhat fuller treatment is called for of this extraordinarily significant movement, with particular reference to its by-products in astrology, demonology, and magic. These monstrous growths were, one feels, no true offspring of the Greek genius, but rather the result of its mismating with Orientalism.[1] Yet astrology, with all its magical accompaniments, had its origin in what in many respects was a pure and ennobling type of religion. In the days when astronomy and astrology had not yet parted company men found in astralism, or the worship of the stars, a cult whose cosmic sweep not only appealed to the deepest yearnings of the mystical spirit, but seemed also to make religion intellectually respectable by allying it with the greatest of the sciences. Astrology thus became "the scientific theology of waning heathenism"[2], and rapidly

[1] "Greek science stands opposed to magic. Magic came into the Mediterranean world from barbarians; it was an unHellenic thing; its professors were Chaldæans, Egyptians, Magians; the very name of it betrays it as foreign. . . . It is only in the decline of the Greek genius that magic and astrology enter into the life of civilized man" (Glover, *The World of the N.T.*, p. 26).

[2] Boll, quoted by Angus, *Religious Quests*, etc., p. 257.

developed into "a learned superstition, which up to modern times has exercised over Asia and Europe a wider dominion than any religion has ever achieved".[1]

The origin of star-worship must be sought very far back in the religion of Babylonia, where long before the marriage of Europe and Asia by Alexander astrology had developed into a full-grown system. It first arrived in Greece apparently about 400 B.C., for the later writings of Plato show some acquaintanceship with it, and Theophrastus (born *c.* 372 B.C.) speaks of the Chaldæans casting horoscopes. Thereafter astrology "fell upon the Hellenistic mind as a new disease falls upon some remote island people",[2] though it was not until the second century, when Rome was relentlessly advancing like "Fate's counterpart on earth",[3] that astral determinism firmly fixed its grip on the Hellenistic world. During the Roman period there is evidence of more than one system of astrology, but planetary astrology was rapidly winning the field, and the Seven Planets—Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn—were enthroned as *Kosmokratores* or "rulers of this world" and arbiters of human destiny. Each planet had its symbol in one of the vowels of the Greek alphabet, and from this comes that persistent use of the number seven which appears, e.g., in the seven days of the week, the seven ages of man, the seven wonders of the world, the seven angels and vials of the Apocalypse, the seventh heaven. Man's destiny and even his disposition depended on which star was in the ascendant at the moment of birth, so that we still "thank our

[1] Cumont, *Astrology and Religion*, p. xv.
[2] Gilbert Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 177.
[3] Tarn., *op. cit.*, p. 310.

lucky stars" and speak of each other as "jovial", "mercurial", or "saturnine". By a simple enough psychological process the stars which determined fate appeared more and more to be hostile rather than kindly powers, and Saturn the chief of them was also the most malignant. Thus the religion of later paganism is absorbed in nothing quite so much as devising means of escape from the prison-house of the seven planets. In earlier days the authentic spirit of Hellenism would have guaranteed the destruction of astrology by astronomy; instead, astrology destroyed astronomy, and had a free field till the time of Copernicus.

The main underlying principles of astralism, both as a religion and a pseudo-science, may be thus summarized :—

(*a*) There is the notion of a *cosmic unity and harmony* which runs through all things and finds its expression in an endless series of affinities and "*correspondences*". Hellenistic and Oriental pantheism saw God in the Cosmos, and the Cosmos in God, and the totality of the Cosmos as one great whole.[1] Naturally such a viewpoint received strong support from the Stoic doctrine of the harmony and providence of the universe, for to the Stoic too the universe was one organic whole, ruled by one Power and bound together by what the Stoic called "sympathy" and the Babylonian astrologers "correspondence". "Don't you think," asks Epictetus, "that all things have been reduced to a unity? . . . that the things of earth are in

[1] "The unity of all life, the mysterious harmony of the least and the nearest with the greatest and the most remote, the conviction that the life of the universe pulsated in all its parts, were as familiar to that ancient cosmic consciousness as to modern biology and psychology" (Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, p. x).

sympathy with the things of heaven?"[1] It was this doctrine of the *συμπάθεια τῶν ὅλων* — the "sympathy" of the whole of creation—according to which whatever befalls any one part affects all the rest, which provided the philosophic basis for the idea that man could enter into fellowship with the cosmic process, and indeed that his individual fate was bound up with it. The "sympathy" of the Stoics and the "correspondence" of the astrologers might seem strange allies, but ultimately they worked together towards the enslavement of man to the stars. If the planets, as was obvious, move according to fixed laws, and if there be a "sympathy" or "correspondence" between the heavens above and the earth beneath, then what happens in the starry realm must be reproduced on earth, and man's actions and destiny must be fixed no less immutably than the motion of the stars. *Heimarmene* or Fate, moving as inexorably as the planets in their orbits, a Power unbiased it may be and yet quite non-moral, rules stars and earth and men alike.

(*b*) From this doctrine of cosmic unity and harmony it follows that the cosmos itself is possessed of and animated by *a world-soul*, a doctrine once again entirely congenial to the Stoics. "The world," says Marcus Aurelius, "is one living organism with one substance and one soul."[2] This soul, in line with the philosophic pantheism of the day, is identified with the divine, and through a common participation in the primordial sources of life all created things become akin. The stars and planets are thus akin to God and man alike; they are "a heavenly race of

[1] Epict., *Diss.*, i, 14, 1.
[2] iv, 40.

gods", "gods visible and created"[1]; yet at the same time, as Pliny says, "Hipparchus can never be sufficiently praised for having better than anyone else proved the kinship of the stars with man, and that our souls are part of the heavens."[2] It is to this notion of the cosmos as a single soul-permeated unity that are due both the mystical attractiveness of astral religion, and also the conviction that the individual human destiny is inextricably bound up with the cosmic process as manifested in the movements of the stars.

(*c*) Hence too the doctrine, familiar to all Hellenistic-Oriental theology and basal to astral religion, that *man himself is a microcosm of the macrocosm*, or in Poseidonian language "the world is a great man and man a little world". Man is an epitome of the universe, holding its secrets within himself, both knowing and to be known by his affinities with it. Here indeed is the secret of man's ability to know, but it is also his sentence to actual slavery, for his soul is but a spark of the celestial fire which glows in the stars, and its destiny is as fixed as are their orbits. "Wherefore man," says Firmicus Maternus, "as a microcosm is sustained by the five planets and the Sun and the Moon by their fiery and eternal motion, so that as a being endowed with life after the fashion of the world he should be controlled by the same divine substance."[3]

The world of ideas in which we have been moving finds its typical figure in *Poseidonius* (born *c.* 130–150 B.C.), concerning whom we cannot do better than

[1] See Angus, *Religious Quests*, etc., p. 265.
[2] Pliny, *N.H.*, ii, 26, 24.
[3] *Math.*, iii, prooem. 2.

quote Tarn : " It has been usual to call everything which exhibits certain tendencies Poseidonius, and to represent him as a double mind, standing between east and west and drawing from both, a philosopher and a man of science, an astrologer and oriental mystic and what not, author of a great system which combined all the floating tendencies of the time, science and superstition, star-worship and popular worship, heaven and earth, men, gods, and demons ; one in whom all things met and from whom they passed out to influence the future. Is this Poseidonius, or only a label for the spirit of the first century ? " [1] Bevan has summed up Poseidonius's aim as being " to make men at home in the universe ".[2] But, concludes Tarn, " his universe admitted too much, for he did not distinguish between what existed and what men believe to exist. He opened the door to demonology and much else. That he did not enter the open door with the crowd matters little ; what the crowd saw was that his presence made their proceedings respectable." [3]

A fair estimate of astralism will not neglect the credit side of the ledger. It can hardly be mere accident that Mithraism was both the most worthy of Christianity's competitors, and also the cult in which astral ideas are most prominent. We need not minimize the undoubted religious appeal of the cult of the stars. Its connection with astronomy made it intellectually respectable ; in its nature mysticism so many of the ancients have witnessed to finding the pathway to real religious uplift that we

[1] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 314.
[2] *Stoics and Sceptics*, p. 98.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 315.

have no right to discredit testimony so obviously sincere. Hear Philo for example : " The vision sent upward by Light and beholding the nature of the stars and their harmonious movement . . . and the harmonious dances of all arranged by the laws of perfect music imparts to the soul an ineffable joy and pleasure."[1] It was no small gain that men found here an exalting religious emotion, stimulated not by quasi-magical sacraments or crudely materialistic ritual, but by the pure contemplation of the heavens. Nor need we doubt its moral effect. As Angus well says, this " cosmic emotion was not a torrent picturesquely rolling over precipices of ecstasy and exaltation : it was harnessed to moral life. ' The love of heaven makes us heavenly ' was its *credo*. In Manilius's phrase the knowledge of heaven calls us *in caelum sacra ad commercia*, ' into holy fellowship with heaven '."[2] Finally astralism, because of its evident focal point in the sun, inevitably culminated in sun-monolatry, and thus consolidated the victory of monotheism. This solar cult was indeed the natural climax of Hellenistic-Oriental and Roman paganism.[3]

II. *Magic and Demonology*

Yet the black side of astralism remains, and for the common man it was probably uppermost. How to escape the toils of inexorable fate, in which he felt

[1] Quoted by Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 269. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 270.

[3] " The last refuge of monotheism in heathenism, which . . . swept all the great worships of strong vitality into its system, softened their differences, accentuated their similarities, by every effort of fancy, false science, or reckless etymology, and in the end Sol Invictus and Mithra were left masters of the field " (Dill, *Roman Society*, p. 556).

himself to be ensnared through his entanglement in the mechanism of the universe ? Thus the Mystery deities, like Isis, are to be praised for this above all else, that "Thou unravellest even the inextricably tangled web of Fate. Thou dost alleviate the tempests of Fortune, and restrainest the harmful courses of the stars". And where even the Saviour-deities were powerless there always remained one other way of escape from the dread *Kosmokratores*, the way of magic : and the worst charge against astralism is that it opened the flood-gates through which during the second century, as Tarn says, "magic poured into the Greek world at astrology's heels ; all the rivers—Assyrian, Babylonian, Anatolian, Persian, Jewish—met in Egypt as in a reservoir, and from Egypt went out to water the earth." [1] It was man's last resort in his attempt to "short-circuit the stars".

Though the thesis of Frazer, who finds in magic the origin of religion, must be rejected, the connection of magic with religion in all ages is undeniable. The very nature of astral religion inevitably led to the strengthening of this unhappy alliance. The basis of most magical ideas is in the notion, so congenial to astralism, of a mysterious system of correspondences in nature, of which if only man learns the secret he can turn to account for his own purpose the potencies which lie hidden in the universe. By such "sympathetic magic" men thought to strike a bargain with the cosmic "powers" and bring compulsion to bear even on the stars. Just how great was the sway of this pseudo-science, a sway all the greater and more terrible because it was at the same time a semi-religion, appears from the large number of

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 316.

magic papyri which have come down to us. There were ceremonies and formulae for manipulating everything in heaven or earth, and for acquiring every sort of personal advantage, among them "omnibus" charms good for any purpose. Generally some particular demon was invoked, and by knowledge of his name and attributes one might for the moment enlist his powers to one's own ends, though later he would probably turn and harm you. Hence the many charms and formulae for restoring the demon quietly to the place where he belongs, "the side in which medieval magic was so lamentably weak."[1] As you could control the demon only by uttering his true name, which he in turn would take care to hide, it was advisable to make sure by invoking him by a vast number of names. Hence the strings of meaningless vocables, a mixture of every known language, which occur in the papyri. Even the ineffable name of Jahweh would be used by Jewish magicians, and even pagans quickly learned to invoke the name of Jesus. Proof of the potency which was believed to reside in an uttered curse appears perhaps in Paul's directions concerning the ritual to be used in excommunication at Corinth.[2]

Magic, we have seen, is bound up with a belief in demons. Plato himself had elaborated the doctrine of demons as intermediaries between gods and men. Later contact with the Orient, and the spread through the Hellenistic world of a dualistic conception of the universe, gave to these beings an increasingly conspicuous place as mediators between a pure and remote Deity and an inherently evil world. Demons acted

[1] Tarn, *op. cit.*, 317.
[2] 1 Cor. v, 5.

as "satraps of the gods".[1] The Pagan world regarded many of these demons as good and beneficent beings, who at length, like Isis and Osiris, might be raised to the rank of deities.[2] But others were wholly evil and were the cause, as the Jews too believed, of insanity, disease, and all the afflictions of a frail humanity. To the Christians the demons were all evil, but nevertheless real, and were identified with the deities of the Pagan pantheon, who had been overthrown by Christ, but sought nevertheless to molest His disciples and lure them to destruction. How real and powerful this demon world was even to Paul appears in his warning concerning the danger of "having communion with devils"[3] and in his hint that it was these demonic "rulers of this world", rather than any earthly authorities, who compassed the crucifixion of Jesus.[4]

It is only with this background in view that we can appreciate the cosmic bearing of the early Christian Gospel. Such an outreach, to include the whole universe in its scheme of salvation, was absolutely essential if the new Gospel was to make a successful appeal to an age when, as Paul puts it, "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly sphere" (Eph. vi, 12).[5] It is

[1] Origen, *c. Celsum*, viii, 35.

[2] Plutarch, *De Is. et Osir.*, 27, 361E. [3] 1 Cor. x, 20 f.

[4] 1 Cor. ii, 6, 8, And see Justin, *Apol.*, ii, 5, 7, 8.

[5] "Religion must aim at making men comfortable in an uncomfortable universe overwhelming to the detached individual. So much was this felt that Christianity itself in its first contact with the outer and larger world was compelled . . . to impose cosmic functions on the person of Jesus, who indeed was better able to bear them than his mythical competitors" (Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 36).

only when we remember this that we can appreciate Paul's cosmic theology as it appears for example in 1 Cor. viii, 6 ; Col. i, 15 ; ii, 15 ; Eph. i, 21, etc. "The whole creation," says Paul, "groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. viii, 22). For the Apostle the work of human redemption is but an episode in a drama still more vast. "Redemption" is not merely the moral experience of man's deliverance from sin, but the world victory over all the demon-powers of evil won by Christ, who "cut away the angelic Rulers and Powers from us, exposing them to all the world and triumphing over them in the cross".[1] Thus Christ died to save not only the individual human soul but the whole cosmos. As Origen puts it : "It would be absurd to affirm that it was only for human sins He tasted death, and not also on behalf of every other creature beyond man who has been involved in sins, *such as the stars*."[2] And we can now perhaps understand the full meaning for a star-haunted world of Paul's triumphant boast, "I am persuaded that neither the ascension of the stars nor their declinations ('height' nor 'depth') shall be able to separate us from the love of God." That these were no imaginary terrors from which Paul promised his converts release appears in a testimony preserved by Clement : "Up to Baptism Fate is valid, but after this the astrologers no longer assert truly." . . . "From this strife and conflict of the Powers the Lord rescues us, and grants us peace from the combats of the Powers and the Angels."[3]

[1] Col. ii, 15, Moffatt.
[2] Origen, *in Joh.*, i, 35.
[3] *Exc. ex Theodoto*, 78, 72.

III. *Hellenistic King-worship*

Another development, hardly less "demonic" in the eyes of Jew and Christian alike, was the rapid spread during the first century of the worship of the Emperor. This feature in the environment of the Apostolic Church, though it came to a head in the political organization of the Roman Empire, was in its origin genuinely Hellenistic. The influences at work in the deification of men have already been touched upon in Chapter II, where we saw that the traditional mythology had been rationalized in pragmatic-historical fashion by the theory that even the great Gods of Olympus were but early rulers and benefactors, who had been raised to the ranks of heaven either through self-deification or through their apotheosis by a grateful posterity. The worship after death of distinguished persons, though most widespread and conspicuous in our period, was no novel development. Thucydides mentions shrines in Athens dedicated to heroes, and tells us that the people of Amphipolis sacrificed each year to the Spartan general Brasidas. Aristotle himself dedicated an altar to Plato, and Diogenes in an epitaph composed in his honour declares that Plato's soul takes rank among the deathless gods. Apotheosis of great men is even justified in current political-philosophic theory, as when Aristotle writes in his *Politics*[1]: "If there exists in a state an individual so pre-eminent in virtue that neither the virtue nor political capacity of all the other citizens is comparable with his . . ., he should not be regarded as a member

[1] iii, 13, 1284a.

of the state at all. For he will be wronged if treated as an equal, when he is thus unequal in virtue and political capacity. Such a man should be rated as a god among men." Here is an elevation of the human to the divine ; and when side by side with it we place the degradation of the divine to the human, which finally bore fruit in Euhemerism, we realize how inevitable king-worship had become.

Thus when a ruler of super-eminent ability and success, such as Alexander, appeared, he qualified almost automatically for divinity, and as W. S. Ferguson puts it, "if gratitude was the essence of worship, it seemed ingratitude to withhold it till the recipient was dead."[1] Yet it is one thing to confer upon a hero posthumous deification, and quite another to deify him while still alive. Thus when Alexander in 324 demanded and received from the Greek cities admission into the circle of their deities, he was compelled to invoke the alleged miracle of his direct begetting by Zeus. It was in fact only in those parts of his realm where the miracle was acknowledged that the *living* Alexander was hailed as a god, except in Egypt where Pharaoh the god-king became such not, like the Greek ruler-god, by virtue of an apotheosis after death, but by an act of divine grace at his succession whereby he became an incarnation of Ammon. Where men balked at his claim to divine birth, as in Macedon itself, Alexander received divine honours only in consequence of an act of posthumous "heroization".

In the case of Alexander it was his brilliant personality and tremendous achievements that raised him to the ranks of the gods. With his successors the

[1] *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. vii, p. 16.

cult became more official. Neither Seleucus, Ptolemy, Antigonus, nor Demetrius demanded divine status, but all in varying degree received divine honours from their subjects. A significant advance is apparent when such spontaneous worship of a living ruler begins to develop into an official imperial cult. Ptolemy I established an official state cult of Alexander as the *Archegetes* of empire, and the next step was taken by Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who associated himself and his sister-wife Arsinoe with Alexander as the *Theoi Adelphoi* (273–271 B.C.), and thus became the first of the Successors to claim definite divine honours during his own life. Thenceforth kings and queens of the royal line after their accession succeeded automatically to the rank of imperial deities, and constituted with their royal predecessors a single "sacred household". In the Seleucid and Attalid empires the steps in the development of the imperial cult cannot be so clearly traced, but it probably proceeded on very much the same lines, save that the Seleucids derived their divine dynasty, not from Alexander as son of Zeus, but from Seleucus who was himself son to Apollo, while at Pergamum there appears no trace of the idea of one "sacred household" in which dead and reigning sovereigns were alike collectively honoured. Everywhere the ostensible popular motive for deification was gratitude for services rendered, as appears from the frequent bestowal of the titles "Saviour" (*Soter*) and "Benefactor" (*Euergetes*). But to the rulers themselves the fiction of deity provided a most convenient "basis in a constitutional state for an extra-constitutional authority. As kings the Successors had no right to interfere with a free city; as gods they had the right

to make known their wishes, and their worshippers the duty to regard them".[1]

IV. *The Roman Emperor-Cult*

Such was the Hellenistic background of the Roman Emperor-cult of New Testament times, which also was a badge of loyalty and unity rather than a religion in the true sense of the term.[2] The way to the apotheosis of rulers was in Rome made more easy by the traditional worship of the *Manes*, who corresponded roughly to the "heroes" of Greece and the "saints" of the Roman Catholic Church. As Rome began to overshadow the Hellenistic world a new object of worship was found in her "Fortune" or "Genius", and as early as 195 B.C. we find the Smyrnæans dedicating a temple to *Roma*. From this it was a short step to the worship of her famous men. Divine honours were offered to Flamininus when he proclaimed the freedom of Greece in 196. Later Cicero smiles at the homage offered to himself in Cilicia, and preens himself on refusing it, though elsewhere he admits that mortals by merit may attain to the status of gods.[3] But it was the victories of Julius Cæsar which first won a place for a Roman ruler in the Roman pantheon. After Pharsalia he was

[1] Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 15. "It meant further . . . the presentation to subjects everywhere of a symbol round which they might, perchance, rally through religious sentiment, since they could not do so through national sentiment" (*op. cit.*, p. 21).

[2] "It was the cosmopolitan form of the national Roman religion. The Cæsar-cult was a test of uniformity and an outstanding example of religion being forced to do duty as a political bond of coherence as practised by the Seleucids or by the Tudors of England" (Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 22).

[3] See *N.D.*, ii, 24, 62.

hailed as a demi-god, and his statue was set up in the temple of Quirinus side by side with that of the god. His murder, followed by the appearance of the comet, the heavenly symbol of his divinity, led to his consecration and a formal decree by Senate and people whereby he was hailed as *divus* and authority was given to "honour him as a god". It should be noted that all through the history of Cæsar-worship only deceased Emperors were strictly speaking *Divi*, and the Senate by refusing the decree of *relatio inter deos* could declare the acts of a departed ruler null and void. Octavian established an official cult by erecting in various parts of the Empire (notably at Nicæa and Ephesus) temples to "the Divine Julius", but he himself, though hailed as *divi filius* after Actium and tacitly encouraging apotheosis by adopting the title *Augustus*, would accept divine honours only in the provinces, and then only as the associate of the goddess *Roma*, while he refused such honours altogether in Italy, and insisted that to the Romans he would become a god only after death and by decree of the Senate. Tiberius, however, was less scrupulous, and frankly accepted divine honours in his lifetime, even in Rome and Italy.

Emperor-worship was in many parts maintained by a purely municipal cultus, and by the end of the reign of Augustus *Cæsarea* and *Augustea* were dedicated in most towns of any standing. But more important for our purpose is the provincial organization, particularly in Asia, of the cult of "Rome and the ruling Emperor". Like Alexander's successors, the Imperial Government found in the fiction of a divine ruler a safe means of making

concessions to the desire of formerly autonomous peoples to preserve something of the machinery of independent government. Thus the former κοινά or *concilia*—political unions of cities, each with its religious observances—had been re-established, so far as they were purely religious, and these "councils", or self-governing religious communities, became in time the model for the provincial κοινά or *concilia* for the organization of the cult of the Imperial deities. The general plan, though there were exceptions, was that there should be one such *concilium* for each province, and by the close of Augustus's principate most of the provinces must have had *concilia*, the chief function of which was the maintenance of the worship of "Rome and the ruling Emperor", to which by a natural process of development the cult of the deceased rulers or *Divi Augusti* was added. The *concilia* consisted of deputies (*legati*, σύνεδροι) from the various *civitates* in the province, who in turn elected a supreme religious functionary under the title of *sacerdos* or *flamen* in the West and ἀρχιερεύς in the East. The holder of the office of *flamen provinciæ* was recognized as the leading personage among the provincials. Usually the temple of Rome and of Augustus stood in the capital city of the province, but in Asia in particular, where the original temple was at Pergamum, the rivalry between the municipalities was so keen that other cities also were authorized to erect *Augustea*. Cities like Smyrna and Ephesus could therefore also claim the *neokoreia* or "caretakership" of an imperial temple (cf. Acts xix, 35 for the word). The office of "Asiarch" is specially interesting because of its

mention in Acts xix, 31. Originally the only "high-priest of Asia" was the chief priest, elected annually, of the Pergamum temple built in 19 B.C., but though he was *the* Asiarch *par excellence* he was not the only Asiarch, for the title, which in earlier days had meant merely a provincial notable,[1] was still apparently used in a wider sense, to denote those who in virtue of the holding of various public offices were qualified for the highest office of high-priest, as well as those who had actually held it.[2] It should be noted that not only the high-priest at Pergamum but also the chief officials of the various other Asian temples are styled in inscriptions "high-priests" and even "Asiarchs".

Though not part of the official machinery of government, the *concilia* were freely used by the Emperors in their dealings with the provinces. They proved to be a useful mirror of provincial opinion, and a means whereby the provinces might be permitted to deal independently with purely local concerns. It is this which makes an understanding of the nature and purpose of the *concilia* so important for the student of Christian origins. It was often the attitude of this or that *concilium*, as the expression of public opinion and the organ of imperial policy, which confronted the Christians with the fateful alternative voiced by Jesus Himself: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

[1] Cf. Strabo, *Geogr.*, xiv, 1, 42.

[2] It is, however, possible that "in course of time the title 'Asiarch' became so closely associated with that of 'high-priest' . . . that only those who had 'passed the chair' of the high-priesthood were allowed to style themselves 'Asiarchs'" (*The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i, prol. i, p. 214).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GNOSTIC WAY

I. *Sources of Gnosticism*

The word Gnosticism has been used to designate a great variety of phenomena which, though clearly akin, are by no means identical. As Dr. Burkitt reminds us, " the Gnostics come before us historically as *Christians*," [1] and it was in fact only the final triumph of orthodox Christianity which made clear the identity of principle which underlay various heretical doctrines, and caused them to be defined generally as " Gnosticism ". Hence the " Gnostics " are still commonly thought of as a body of Christian heretics. But the same tendencies were at work in the Hellenistic-Oriental world all through our period, and though they took most definite form within the Christian Church, it is necessary to remind ourselves that behind the streams of Christian Gnosticism there lies a vast dim hinterland of purely pagan Gnosticism, which may be in part at least explored by a study of Christian Gnosticism and a comparison of the latter with the Hermetic writings and what we know of the mystical philosophy of Babylonia, Persia, and Egypt. The way of Gnosis had been mapped out in all its essential features before the Christian era had begun. John the Baptist was not the first to herald the " knowledge of salvation " (γνῶσιν σωτηρίας, Luke i, 77), nor

[1] *Church and Gnosis*, pp. 7, 9.

Paul the first who professed to give a teaching "to make thee wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii, 15). In other words Gnosticism, when it appeared as a dangerous heresy within the Christian Church, was not a novel attempt to pervert by new doctrine the orthodox system of Christian belief; it was rather an effort to harmonize that system, before its intellectual expression had hardened into fixed moulds, with a whole complex of conceptions and aspirations by which the Gentile world of the day was dominated. In the present chapter our purpose is not to study Gnostic phenomena inside the Church, but to trace that drift of tendencies in the Hellenistic age which was powerfully felt in the environment of the New Testament and may be described as "incipient Gnosticism".

Gnosticism as a movement is too diverse for us to seek its origin in any one ultimate source, whether cultural or geographical, but certain definite influences stand out:

(*a*) Gnosticism is the inevitable offspring of Hellenistic-Oriental *syncretism*. "One can easily discover in the Gnostic systems Babylonian mythology, Persian dualism, Egyptian mysticism and occultism, the Orphic cosmology of a fall and the restitution of the soul from the weary circle of reincarnations, Jewish theology, Greek philosophy, especially Platonism and Pythagoreanism, astral ideas and mystical conceptions and practices, together with the idea of a First or Heavenly Man of Eastern provenance." Gnosticism may thus be generally defined as "the religious reaction of the syncretistic centuries to the intellectual forces of the time".[1]

[1] See Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

(*b*) There is the specifically *intellectual and metaphysical interest*, which in the Hellenistic age corresponded somewhat to the "scientific spirit" in our own. From one angle Gnosticism may be regarded as a long-sustained effort to reconcile religion and science and reduce religious beliefs to a comprehensive system of metaphysic. Hence the intimate association of all Gnostic systems with that complex of astral and cosmic theories which, however bizarre they may appear to us, then represented a real advance by scientific astronomical theory over mere popular tradition and myth.

(*c*) There is the supremely practical interest, the demand of men for a *way of escape* from the cosmic machinery in which they felt themselves to be entangled. *Gnosis* shades off into *dunamis*, the power to escape the thraldom of the "Archons". On account of ignorance the stars might hold man a prisoner of fate confined within the enclosing spheres. But there was a "knowledge" of celestial geography, of the "gates" to be passed, of the guardian demon at each gate and the proper password for each, ere the soul could escape and ascend to its true home. A great part of the Gnostic remains consists of charms to be uttered by the soul as it escapes past each of the Planets in turn. "By means of this Gnosis," says Irenæus, "man receives power to overcome those very angels that made the world."[1] The object of men in pursuit of Gnosis was thus not speculation for the sake of speculation, but the very practical object of "short-circuiting the stars". Only thus perhaps shall we understand the appeal to the ancient

[1] Iren., I, xxiii, 5.

world of notions which to us seem mere febrile fancies of over-heated imaginations.[1]

II. *Leading Ideas of Gnosticism*

We may now glance briefly at the main conceptions which in general combine to make up the Gnostic point of view :—

(*a*) There is an underlying *dualistic view of the universe* which is probably due largely to the influence of Persian religion, though, as Bousset has pointed out, the concrete mythological dualism of Persia (where Ormuzd and Ahriman are personifications of the natural principles of light and darkness in eternal conflict) has in its Hellenistic environment become rather the antithesis between the good spiritual and the evil material world.[2] The result, as always, was a thoroughgoing pessimism which found its practical expression, as we can judge by Paul's references to incipient Gnosticism at Corinth and Colosse, either in rigorous ascetism or unbridled libertinism (e.g. Col. ii, 20 ff.). The redemption sought is the deliverance of the soul from the material world, which is regarded as intrinsically evil, and its translation into the higher world of pure being—a point of view aptly expressed in the Greek catchword *soma-sema*, " the body a

[1] " We have never been thoroughly frightened ; the ancient world was frightened ; there is the great difference . . . ; till the unknown has been realized as something terrible, till we have had the feeling of helplessness and ignorance in the face of an immense universe, the feeling of a lost child in a huge strange city, we can hardly understand the mood which led men so eagerly to seek for ' knowledge ' and catch at anything which seemed to promise them light and safety " (Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 81).

[2] Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, p. 118.

tomb". The evil of material things was seen mainly in their transitoriness and their subjection to sensual passion, while the redemption sought was the attainment of the Platonic-Stoic ideal of abiding and unchangeable being without passion and without needs.

(*b*) There is the whole complex of pseudo-scientific *cosmic and astral theorizings* through which men sought to resolve this dualism. The earth is separated from the upper realms of light by a series of intermediary spheres, usually seven in number, over each of which rules one of the planetary demons or *kosmokratores*. It is they who determine all that happens within their respective spheres, and through their domain that imprisoned divine spark which is the soul must find its way to the Ogdoad or transcendent world beyond all the seven spheres.

(*c*) There is the practical religious goal of *salvation*. For it must be remembered that, however intellectual its basis may appear, the true affinities of Gnosticism are with religion rather than with philosophy, and the key to its understanding is its practical religious motive. Like the Mystery Religions it has as its central idea redemption from an evil world into a world of life and freedom. The way to such redemption is thus envisaged :—

(i) A *gnosis* or spiritual enlightenment is offered to the elect, whereby through "knowledge" of the hidden path the soul can find its way home. But the mere translation "knowledge" is quite inadequate and misleading, for such *gnosis* is not so much an attainment of human reason as a supernatural endowment communicated from above. The idea of *gnosis* is thus closely related to that of revelation, for it is

everywhere assumed that man cannot himself win the higher knowledge, which must therefore be revealed to him from the heavenly world. *Gnosis* " is not taught, but when God wills it is brought to remembrance ".[1]

(ii) There is the doctrine of the *Ascent of the Soul*, which through possession of this *gnosis* is able to thread its way through the spheres to its transcendent home, subduing or deceiving the guardian demons by means of pass-words and charms, the adept's equipment with which was the chief aim of Gnostic discipline. But the Ascent also had a moral significance. The soul had at birth descended through these same spheres, and in ascending it sloughs off in each those evil material qualities acquired in each during the downward passage, so that it may finally enter the eighth sphere in perfect purity. In its ascent the soul is often represented as being guided by a divine escort or "psycho-pomp ", notably Hermes. The epitaph of a Greek sailor found at Marseilles runs thus : " Among the dead there are two companies ; one moves upon earth, the other in the ether among the choruses of the stars. I belong to the latter, for I have obtained a God for my Guide." [2]

(iii) This suggests the question whether the *idea of a* " *Soter* ", so very prominent in all Christian-Gnostic systems, has any place in pre-Christian Gnosticism. Is it the case that for incipient Hellenistic Gnosticism there was not only a way of redemption

[1] *Corp. Herm.*, xiii. The refs. in the following pages to the Hermetic writings are according to Walter Scott's annotations in his edition of *Hermetica*.

[2] Quoted by Angus, *op. cit.*, p. 311 from Cumont, *After-life*, p. 163.

but also a redeemer ? Obviously the answer is of the greatest importance for the study of the development of New Testament Christology, for it has often been argued that Paul's conception of the pre-existent heavenly Being, who being in the form of God took upon him the form of a servant and descended to earth for man's redemption, is but a Christian adaptation of an earlier pagan-Gnostic conception of a divine " Man " who has descended through the spheres of the *kosmokratores* for our salvation. As Bevan poses it the problem is this, " whether primitive Christianity and Gnosticism fitted to Jesus of Nazareth the conception of a Redeemer older than Christianity, a conception which existed originally apart from him, or whether it was the Christian belief in Jesus which induced the Gnostics to introduce the figure of a Redeemer into a scheme which had originally been framed without one." [1] The second alternative seems the truer one. In marked contrast to the Mystery Religions incipient Hellenistic Gnosticism, while it is still uninfluenced by specifically Christian faith in a Person, has no place for a personal Redeemer or Saviour-God. This is true both of Poseidonius and also, as we shall see, of the Hermetic writings. The later Gnostic doctrine of a Redeemer, who descends for man's salvation and re-ascends, appears to be nothing more than a repetition, under Christian influence and possibly with the help of the pagan idea of a " psycho-pomp ", of the more primitive idea of the descent and ascent of the soul. True Hellenistic Gnosticism had no need for a Redeemer : the possession of a divinely revealed " knowledge " sufficed to enable the soul to win its

[1] Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

way home. Redemption by such "knowledge" and redemption by a Saviour, as it appears in later Christian Gnosticism, appear in fact to be two alternative schemes which have been insufficiently harmonized.

Nevertheless, *gnosis* being essentially "revealed knowledge", there do appear in the Hermetic writings traces of a divine *Revealer* of knowledge, as when the author of the most important tract represents himself as having been divinely instructed by the Supreme Mind Himself in personal form as *Poimandres*. We may conclude then with Bevan that "so far as Jesus appears in the Gnostic systems as the revealer of *gnosis*, we may admit that he stands in the same category with the Divine or inspired revealers to whom the mystic sects generally ascribed the origin of their traditions"; but the "facts seem to point to the figure of the Personal Redeemer not being an original part of the Hellenistic theology".[1] The place given by Christian Gnosticism to the Personal Redeemer is the most significant possible testimony to the supreme greatness of the historical Jesus.

III. *The Hermetic Writings*

The chief surviving document of non-Christian Gnosticism is the collection of writings under the name of Hermes Trismegistus, of which the most important tracts are the *Poimandres* (a name which apparently means "Shepherd of men"), in which a mysterious being characterized as ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς appears as the instructor of Hermes, and the *Asclepius*, which exists only in a Latin translation

[1] Bevan, *op. cit.*, pp. 104, 106.

attributed to Apuleius. Though there is undoubtedly a superficial resemblance between Hermetic teaching and Christianity, the Hermetic writings are better described as " pagan Gnosticism, or Gnosticism minus Christianity ".[1] The *Corpus* is composed of very various strata, by no means congruous with each other, and each one in itself displaying a highly syncretistic blend of doctrine. So far as we can judge, the compilation was made about A.D. 300 and incorporates documents dating from the beginning of the first century A.D. to the end of the third ; but there is every reason to suppose that the conceptions reflected in these documents belong to a much earlier date.[2] But the exact composition of this curious hotch-potch is still in dispute. Reitzenstein believes that the ingredients are mainly Egyptian with a Hellenistic-Stoic seasoning, while others (e.g. Cumont, W. Otto, Zielinski) are inclined to emphasize the preponderance of Greek philosophical elements in the compound.

To us the *Corpus Hermeticum* is chiefly important as illustrating the existence in a non-Christian and probably pre-Christian environment of those characteristic Gnostic ideas, briefly outlined above, which found their fullest expression in later Christian Gnosticism. Thus :—

(*a*) We have the characteristic *dualism* : " The world is the *pleroma* of evil and God the *pleroma* of

[1] St. George Stock in Hastings' *E.R.E.*, vol. vi, p. 629.

[2] They embody " conceptions of Greek philosophy of the religious Stoic-Peripatetic type, relics of early Egyptian ideas, elements of the magical and alchemistic doctrines so prevalent in Egypt, and liturgic fragments which may belong to Hellenized Egyptian communities, but which at any rate reflect the syncretistic Mystery-cults between 300 B.C. and A.D. 300 " (Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, p. 104).

good " (vi, 4). Thus the usual, though not universal, theory of the world's origin is that it was created not directly by the Good God Himself, but through the operation of a " Demiurge " such as the *Nous* or the *Topos-nous* (" space-mind ") or the *Logos*. The idea of *Logos* is, however, not nearly so prominent as that of *Nous*—a fact of some importance when estimating the possible influence of Herméticism on, e.g., the Fourth Gospel.

(*b*) Salvation is through a *gnosis*, whether it be knowledge of God, the construction of the cosmos, the nature and dual origin of man, the road for the soul's ascent. " The virtue of the soul is knowledge. He who has got knowledge is good and pious ; he is already divine " (x, 9). Such knowledge is essentially a divine communication from above, so that Hermeticism may be regarded as revealed rather than natural religion, almost indeed as a religion of grace. God " presents all things to us through our senses, and thereby manifests Himself through all things, and in all things ; and especially to those to whom He wills to manifest Himself. . . . Pray then that you may find favour with Him, and that one ray of Him, if only one, may flash into your mind, that so you may have power to grasp in thought that mighty Being. . . . For the Lord manifests Himself ungrudgingly through all the Universe " (v, 2).

(*c*) The *soul in its ascent* homeward passes through the seven planetary spheres, shedding off in each that particular passion or affection which it took on from each in its downward path. " The Administrators (i.e. the planetary demons) took delight in Man, and each of them gave him a share of his own nature " (i, 13). " And thereupon the man mounts upward

through the structure of the heavens. And to the first zone of heaven he gives up the force which works increase and that which works decrease ; to the second zone the machinations of evil cunning ; to the third zone the lust whereby men are deceived ; to the fourth zone domineering arrogance ; to the fifth zone unholy daring and rash audacity ; to the sixth zone evil strivings after wealth ; and to the seventh zone the falsehood which lies in wait to work harm. And thereupon, having been stripped of all that was wrought upon him by the structure of the heavens, he ascends to the substance of the eighth sphere, being now possessed of his own proper power ; and he sings together with those who dwell there, hymning the Father ; and they that are there rejoice with him at his coming " (i, 25, 26*a*).

(*d*) There is a most interesting dialogue between Hermes and his son Tat on *regeneration*. Such *palingenesia* is possible only for one who has cut himself loose from the world, and Tat having renounced the world prays his father to communicate the secret. While Hermes explains that this lies in a revelation of the Divine Will to the heart, Tat himself experiences a transformation whereby he is delivered from the twelve propensities of evil and endowed with the ten powers of God. Tat then exclaims, " O thou first author of the work by which the Rebirth has been wrought in me, to thee, O God, do I, Tat, offer reasonable sacrifices " (*λογικὰς θυσίας*, xiii, 21), a most striking parallel to Paul's words " present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service " (*λογικὴν λατρείαν*, Rom. xii, 1).

(*e*) The revelation of saving *gnosis* is sometimes

imparted by a *divine prophet or teacher* to an elect or "sympathetic" pupil, e.g. by Poimandres or by Hermes to Tat or Asclepius, or by Isis to her son Horus. "When the Craftsman determined to reveal himself, he breathed into certain godlike men a passionate desire to know him, and bestowed on their minds a radiance ampler than that which they already had within their breasts, that so they might first will to seek the yet unknown God, and then have power to find Him. But this, Horus my wondrous son, it would not have been possible for men of mortal breed to do, if there had not arisen one whose soul was sympathetic to the influence of the holy Powers of heaven. And such a man was Hermes, he who won knowledge of all. Hermes saw all things, and understood what he saw, and had power to explain to others what he understood" (*Exc.*, xxiii, 4–5).

(*f*) But though we thus have the idea of a Divine Revealer, the corresponding *idea of a Soter*, or Redeemer God, is conspicuously absent. For man, as the result of *gnosis*, has within himself the power to work out his own salvation. "Man is a marvel then, Asclepius; honour and reverence to such a being! Man takes on him the attributes of a god, as though he were himself a god" (*Ascl.*, i, 6*a*). No real parallel in current paganism has been discovered to the Christian belief in One who took upon Himself the form of a servant, and descended from heaven to earth in order to redeem.[1]

(*g*) Finally Hermeticism is to be distinguished alike from the Mystery Religions and from later Gnosticism, inasmuch as it dispensed entirely with

[1] See Bevan, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

sacramentalism and its inevitable concomitant, sacerdotalism. The vision, through which the worshipper attains oneness with God, is granted by immediate divine illumination, and not mediated by the external stimulus of symbols or sacral acts. The Hermeticists have sometimes been called the Quakers of the ancient world, for they recognized the need neither for cult-ritual nor for organized institutions such as the Mystery brotherhoods or the Christian churches. Where the sincere seeker after *gnosis* is, there too is God. In the prologue to the Asclepius, when such seekers enter the shrine, "the place was made holy by the pious awe of the four men, and was filled with God's presence" (*Ascl.*, i*b*). Hermeticism was thus of the prophetic, not of the priestly, type of religion, and considering the almost universal sway of sacramentalism this inwardness is all the more arresting. The seeker is his own priest and every place is hallowed ground. "Whither shall I look when I praise Thee? Upward or downward, inward or outward? For Thou art the place in which all things are contained; there is no other place beside Thee; all things are in Thee.... And at what time shall I sing hymns to Thee? For it is impossible to find a season or a space of time that is apart from Thee" (v, 10*b*, 11).

IV. *Mandaism*

One other example of the "Gnostic Way" must be mentioned, because of the attention given to it in recent work upon the Fourth Gospel. The only surviving Gnostic sect is the *Mandæans*, the remnants of whom are still to be found in a religious community on the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates.

They are still noted for their observance of rites of immersion in running water, and for their emphasis on certain traditional teaching on "Life" and "Light". Though they are called by their neighbours "*Subbis*" or "baptizers", the name "*Mandæans*" which they themselves use does really mean "Gnostics". Their sacred literature, written in a peculiar Aramaic dialect, consists of three books: the *Book of John*, of miscellaneous contents, many of the sections dealing with the legend of John the Baptist; the *Qolasta* ("Quintessence"), which consists mainly of hymns and liturgies; and, most important, the *Ginza* ("Treasure"), which is divided into two halves, one dealing with the Living and the other with the Dead, and known respectively as the *Right* and the *Left Ginza* (*G. R.* and *G. L.*). Portions of these documents first reached European libraries about the middle of the seventeenth century. So far as can be judged, they were not reduced to their present form much before A.D. 700; but it can be safely assumed that the material from which they were compiled dates back to a very much earlier period.

The origin of the sect has been and still is keenly disputed, and several theories are advanced:—

(*a*) On account of the prominence given to baptismal rites and to the legend of John the Baptist, the daring hypothesis has been advanced that the Mandæans are actually the descendants of a Baptist sect, like the disciples mentioned in Acts xviii, 25 ff.; xix, 1 ff., which originated in the district east of Jordan, or even in Palestine itself. This, however, is most improbable, for it has been shown that the references to John the Baptist all belong to the later strata of the Mandæan tradition, and are almost

entirely dependent upon the Canonical Gospels,[1] interest also being stimulated through contact with Islam. It is even doubtful whether the apparently Jewish elements in Mandæan teaching come directly from Judaism, and are not rather mediated through the Syriac version of the Old Testament current in the Mesopotamian Christian Churches.

(*b*) It is therefore urged, notably by Burkitt, that the Mandæans are "properly to be looked upon as Christians, though heretical Christians. They are, in fact, Dissenters, and like other dissenters from the established forms of religion or philosophy they tend to use a peculiar set of terms".[2] According to Theodore bar Konai, writing in 792, the sect was founded by a certain Ado who derived his teaching from the Marcionites, the Manichæans, and the "Kanteans", the latter apparently being neither Jews nor Christians but some obscure Babylonian brotherhood. Burkitt feels that "there is no reason to reject the evidence of Theodore", and that we may paraphrase his account by saying that Mandæan doctrine "is a mixture of Christian and non-Christian elements, the Christian elements being mostly derived from Marcionite and Manichæan sources".[3] The Mandæans were heretics inasmuch as they were violently hostile to the official Church and its conception of Christ. "It is not the Christ of the Gospels, but the Christ of fully developed ecclesiastical organization and policy to which Mandaism is hostile."[4] Thus they reject *Eshu*

[1] See, e.g., Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, p. 114, with references to the work of Lietzmann.

[2] Burkitt, *op. cit.*, p. 105. [3] *op. cit.*, 103.

[4] *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Mshiha (Jesus Christ), but accept the true Jesus, the Stranger, whom they call *Anushuthra*, a figure whom Burkitt regards as parallel to the Marcionite Jesus. He concludes that "it requires very strong detailed evidence to make it probable that any parts of the system which do not seem to come from Marcionites or Manichees were derived directly from a Mediterranean source".[1]

(*c*) A third and perhaps a more probable view would regard Mandaism as a curious amalgam of Gnostic elements, of which a greater proportion than Burkitt would admit are from non-Christian sources, or at least have developed independently of Christian influence. For Burkitt himself admits that it would be "hopelessly perverse to derive all Mandæan mythology and praxis from Mesopotamian Marcionite Christianity alone",[2] and suggests that "some of the resemblances between some of the very different 'Gnostic' systems may come from a common understanding of the actual facts which ultimately gave rise to the pseudo-science of Astrology, facts that had to be taken account of when once they had been apprehended". Some of these characteristic Gnostic notions appearing in the Mandæan writings are the "*soma-sema*" view of life[3]; the doctrine of a Demiurge; the Ascent of the soul when freed from the body through the "Wards", through which only those sealed by baptism can pass; and the doctrine of envoys or guides who bring to believers a knowledge of the truth, by which they shall live here and hereafter

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 119. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 113.

[3] "The soul that is worthy speaks and goes away, from the world even unto the abode of light. Naked was I brought into the world: and empty am I come out of it . . . and turn my course unto the abode of light" (*G.L.*, 82 f.).

pass upward to the sphere of Light. First among such envoys is "*Manda d'Hayye*", the term from which "Mandæan" is derived, which means literally "*gnosis* of life", almost "knowledge of salvation". Burkitt notes that the γνῶσις σωτηρίας of the Benedictus (Luke i, 77) "is rendered in the Syriac Bible by *madd' a dhayye*, which is exactly the same, syllable for syllable, as the Mandæan term".[1] The concept then becomes fully personified as "my Lord *Manda d'Hayye*" and is so used throughout the writings. "A support is He to me in the world, and a Helper in the place of Light."[2]

The crucial question is whether we are dealing here with a pre-Christian Gnosticism; and our feeling is that it still remains at any rate theoretically possible that certain elements are pre-Christian, and therefore must be reckoned with in a study of influences preparatory to the New Testament. But the practical importance of Mandaism has certainly been exaggerated beyond all reason, particularly by those who have thought to find here the long sought solution for the hitherto insoluble problem of the Fourth Gospel. Reitzenstein in his studies of the later strata of syncretistic tradition had attempted to identify the Synoptic Jesus, as Son of Man, with the figure of the Redeemed-Redeemer which he thought to trace in various proto-Gnostic Near-East religions of salvation under the name of *Anthropos*, *Enosh*, *Manda d'Hayye*, Messenger, Word, etc., and whom, it is alleged, the disciples of John and their descendants revered in the person of the Baptist.[3] Bultmann next extended the influence of the same figure to the Fourth Gospel,

[1] *Op. cit.*, 109. [2] *Johannesbuch*, 131.
[3] See Kraeling in *Journ. Bib. Lit.*, vol. xlix, 1930, p. 143 f.

suggesting that the Prologue is actually a Mandæan document adapted to Christian use, and claiming that the Johannine Christ is but a Christian counterpart of the proto-Gnostic Redeemed-Redeemer.[1] Finally W. Bauer in the latest edition of his commentary on the Fourth Gospel[2] has ransacked the Mandæan writings for parallels to thoughts and phrases in John.

It is undeniable that there are many close parallels between the ideas of the Fourth Gospel and of the Mandæan literature. Prominent in both is the thought of the mission of a divine Revealer to impart life to men and lead them from darkness to life[3]; of worlds which "know not" *Manda d'Hayye* and "do not understand his light"; of a Redeemer who knows his own and chooses them out of the world. The words "light", "truth", "glory" occur in both literatures with great frequency. Of the Mandæan Saviour it is said, "Thou revealedst to us the *way* of *life*, and didst allow us to travel the ways of *truth* and faith."[4] There are references too to "water" and "bread" and the "spring of life" and "the Helper". And finally sayings occur which are closely parallel to the great "I am" sayings of the Gospel. Thus, "the true envoy am I, in whom is no lie"; "a vine are we, a vine of life, a tree which cannot lie"[5]; "a Shepherd am I who loves his sheep; I keep watch over my sheep and my lambs . . . I bring them into the fold, the good fold, and then with me they find

[1] Bultmann in *Z.N.T.W.*, 1925, pp. 100–146.

[2] In Lietzmann's *Handbuch zum N.T.*

[3] "The Sent of the Light am I, whom the Great One has sent into the world" (*G.R.*, ii, 64).

[4] Quoted by Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

[5] Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, 59 ff.

pasture." [1] And this as a last striking parallel: "I (*Manda d'Hayye*) desire to go away, to assign Hibil a place in the new chamber, and come then quickly to you." [2]

Once the close parallelism is admitted three possible explanations present themselves. Is the Fourth Gospel dependent on the Mandæan texts? Or have the latter borrowed, at least in part, from the Gospel? Or have both drawn from a common source of syncretistic symbols and ideas? Bultmann, rashly we think, commits himself to the first theory. Burkitt, leaning toward the second explanation, characterizes Bultmann's notions as "extremely paradoxical".[3] The Mandæan sayings have no right to be considered even "independent parallels", but are rather "borrowings, often unintelligent borrowings, or adaptations".[4] Nevertheless, the third alternative is probably nearer the truth. This is exceedingly well put by Vincent Taylor, who notes that "the Mandæan sayings are not so much verbal parallels to those contained in the Fourth Gospel as rather interesting and sometimes close *analogues*; they act upon the mind like cues which by association of ideas prompt the recall of more familiar passages".[5] This means that neither is the Gospel directly dependent on the Mandæan texts, nor the latter upon the

[1] Lidzbarski, *Das Johannesbuch*, 44.

[2] Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

[3] The Mandæan sacred books were not gathered together till after the victories of Islam: it would be indeed surprising if they demonstrably set forth a religious theory of which the Gospel according to John, a work published in its present form about the end of the first Christian century, presented a later development!" (Burkitt, *op. cit.*, p. 92).

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 114. [5] *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xxviii, p. 539.

Gospel. Rather should we suppose that "the Mandæan authors use forms of religious expression which have a long history behind them, extending probably into Johannine times".[1] This argument is not invalidated by the late date of the Mandæan writings, for the same forms of expression occur in, e.g., Philo, the Odes of Solomon, the Hermetic writings, the Manichæan fragments; and the very diversity of these writings would seem to prove the universality and antiquity of the ideas which they share. Our conclusion then should be that "the Evangelist and the Mandæan authors have independently drawn upon the same stock of common forms, symbols, and figures, and to some extent of ideas as well", and thus, "the importance of the Mandæan sayings is that they are echoes of a world of thought and speech in which the Evangelist habitually lived."[2] This strange background of the Gospel has been farther enlarged by the work of Odeberg, who shows that the comparison with Mandæan texts is much too narrow, and that other strands of syncretistic mysticism, notably some which appear in Rabbinic exegesis, have been woven in the pattern of the Gospel.[3] Mandaism is only one among many keys, but not the master-key, to the understanding of Johannine Christianity.

After treading thus the tortuous path of *Gnosis*, we shall realize perhaps better with what relief the Hellenistic world turned to the Christian Gospel. "It must have seemed such a simplification. Instead of the enormous apparatus of mystical words and ceremonial practices, to believe that in order to conquer all possible terrors of the unknown, the whole

[1] p. 545. [2] p. 545.
[3] Hugo Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel*, Uppsala, 1929.

range of ghostly enemies, one needed only to know Jesus!"[1] "When the world with all its wisdom failed to know God in his wisdom, God resolved to save believers by the 'sheer folly' of the Christian message."[2]

[1] Bevan, *op. cit.*, 87.
[2] 1 Cor. i, 21. Moffatt.

CONCLUSION

Chapter Eight

HELLENISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Throughout the preceding chapters it has been possible to illustrate only incidentally the influence of the various movements discussed upon the teaching of the New Testament. As a conclusion to our study it may be profitable to summarize briefly the points at which Hellenistic tributaries may be seen entering the main stream of a fundamentally Jewish Gospel. And yet, after all, was this original Gospel so purely Jewish? It is too often assumed that the Hellenistic element in Christianity is merely a late accretion, which corrupted an essentially Jewish religion and half-paganized the Christian Church. The truth is that, though the thought of Jesus himself may have been purely Jewish, as Dean Inge puts it "Judaic Christianity was a local affair and had a very short life",[1] and the Church was half Greek almost from the first. Paul and most of his fellow-missionaries were themselves Hellenists whose religion, even before they were Christians, had become coloured by Hellenism. It is now generally recognized that the Hellenizing process began much earlier than writers such as Harnack and Hatch were wont to allow, and that there is in fact a Gentile bias from beginning to end of our New Testament.

[1] *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 33.

I. *Language of the New Testament*

This ceases to be surprising when we realize that the very *language* of the New Testament is the living tongue of the Hellenistic world. Inscriptions and papyri have taught us that New Testament Greek, so far from being either " tired " Greek, as compared with the stilted literary " Atticism " of the day, or " Biblical Greek "—the special language as it were of the Holy Spirit—in fact corresponds almost exactly to the " common speech " of the people, as we have it illustrated in fragments of domestic and commercial correspondence salvaged from the waste-baskets of antiquity.[1] It is hardly surprising that the ideas which thus clothe themselves take on also a noticeably Hellenistic colouring.

When one passes from language to *literary style* the influence of the Greek tradition is still apparent. St Luke's Gospel, called by Renan " the most beautiful book in the world ", is therein typically Greek, and may be considered one of the literary masterpieces of the Greek language. Such books as Hebrews, James, 1 Peter—though there is much in the thought of each which is decidedly Jewish—are written in a careful and polished Greek style. The speeches in the Book of Acts are generally considered to reflect the Greek habit (illustrated best by Thucydides) of recording, not the *ipsissima verba* of the speaker, but the sentiments which the author considers dramatically fitting to the occasion. Even the Gospels,

[1] " In the papyri and the ostraca on the one hand, and in the New Testament on the other, the underground stream of the people's language springs up powerfully into the daylight " (Deissmann, *The N.T. in the Light of Modern Research*, p. 80).

according to Dr. E. F. Scott, " may have owed something to Greek example. The age in which they appeared was also that which produced Plutarch's *Lives*, their nearest parallel in classical literature ; and Plutarch himself took up a prevailing fashion ".[1] Finally the use of allegory, best illustrated in Hebrews and the Fourth Gospel, and the assumption that in all revelation there is a hidden import which must be sought out and explained, are essentially Greek, and may be traced back through the Alexandrian Philo to the allegorizing by Plato of the ancient Greek myths.

II. *Mythological Ideas*

This last remark reminds us that according to many scholars there are elements in the New Testament closely akin to Greek *mythological ideas*. Such, it might be claimed, are some features of the Birth Stories of Matthew and Luke. Such a kinship is frankly acknowledged by, e.g., Justin Martyr when he writes of the Virgin Birth : " When we say that the Word, who is the first-born of God, was produced without sexual union . . . we propound nothing different from what you believe regarding those whom you esteem sons of Jupiter." [2] The germ of the story of a supernatural birth would appear to be Greek, however true it may be that its literary expression is characteristically Jewish. Similarly the idea of a visible and material Ascension of Christ to heaven, at a definite moment distinguished historically from the Resurrection, appears only in the writings of

[1] *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 20.
[2] *Apol.*, xxi.

the Hellenistic-Gentile Luke who, it is suggested, may have conceived the dramatic finale to the post-resurrection appearances on the analogy of the belief, current apparently in the contemporary Græco-Roman world, that the spirits of various great men had been seen visibly to ascend to heaven.[1] We perhaps have the complement of this conception in the strange idea of 1 Peter iii, 18–20 that in the interval between his death and resurrection Jesus " descended into Hell " and " preached to the spirits in prison ", just as the mythical heroes Orpheus, Odysseus, Aeneas had been similarly privileged to descend to the lower world and return. The influence of Græco-Roman mythological notions perhaps also appears in the *Nero-redivivus* superstition of the Apocalypse, which is in large part a Christian polemic against Cæsar-worship ; and even in the same book's doctrine of a " millennium ".[2]

III. *The Idea of God*

The New Testament *idea of God* is of course fundamentally Hebrew ; but here and there Greek conceptions emerge, as for example the emphasis upon God's immanence in Paul's speech at Athens, where in the authentic tones of Stoic and Epicurean the Apostle declares of God that " in him we live and

[1] Thus Suetonius says of Augustus that when his body was burnt his very image was seen ascending to heaven. To assume pagan influence here would, however, be rash in view of the Hebrew story of Elijah's ascent.

[2] " Plato has his own millennarianism, so to speak ; whereof, conceivably, faint echoes have rolled on as far as into the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation " (M. Hutton, *The Greek Point of View*, p. 93).

move and have our being ; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring " (Acts xvii, 27–8). Again, closely akin to Stoicism is Paul's declaration that all down the ages man has been able to acquire a knowledge of the " invisible things of God " through a study of his visible works (Rom. i, 20 ; cf. Acts, xiv, 17) ; and the way in which he bases his claim for the equality of Jew and Greek not on the common fatherhood of God but, like any Greek philosopher, on his *unity* (Rom. iii, 29 f.). But, generally speaking, the New Testament doctrine of God is little influenced by Hellenistic ideas.

IV. *New Testament Cosmology*

It is otherwise when we pass to New Testament *conceptions of the universe*. Frankly Greek are two cosmological statements in 2 Peter : the idea that " there were heavens of old, and an earth compacted out of water and through water " (iii, 5) runs back through the Stoics to Thales, while the idea of a fiery cataclysm at the end of the age appears to be Stoic rather than Hebrew (iii, 7, 10, 12). The debt which the writer to the Hebrews owes to the Platonic doctrine of ideas for his view of the world is unmistakable. In every chapter we meet the contrast between earthly and heavenly, shadow and substance, pattern and reality—a viewpoint which goes back to the Platonic teaching that the material world is but a reflection of a higher spiritual world which alone is real. Hence also the Johannine conception of " truth " or " reality " ; and the pure Platonism of Paul's famous declaration, " We look not at the things which

are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv, 18). Greek also, rather than Hebrew (even when allowance is made for the influence of the parallel Hebrew idea of the "Wisdom" of God), are the passages where the universe is said to be created and sustained by Him in whom the Divine Logos is incarnate : "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col. i, 17) ; he is "the heir of all things, through whom God also made the worlds" (Heb. i, 2) ; he is one who "upholds all things by the word of his power" (Heb. i, 3). The last statement is an exact parallel, in a more personal form, to Philo's remark about the Logos that "he is the firmest and most secure support of the universe". Greek cosmological ideas are also in part responsible for the cosmic functions ascribed to Christ in redemption : it is his mission "to reconcile all things to himself . . . whether things upon earth, or things in the heavens" (Col. i, 20. ; cf. Rom. viii, 22), and through his victory all demonic "principalities and powers" of the Hellenistic cosmology are overcome (Col. ii, 15, etc.).

V. *Anthropology and Psychology*

The influence of Greek *anthropological and psychological ideas* is often apparent. In his view of man's constitution Paul stands at many points nearer to the Greek philosophers than to the Hebrew Scriptures. His insistence upon the share of the body in immortality (1 Cor. xv, 35 ff.) is of course characteristically Hebrew, even though he may seem to turn

Greek when he concedes that the material body is "of the earth earthy", and that its natural destiny is to decay and disappear. But like Plato he speaks of an "outer man" and an "inner man" (2 Cor. iv, 16), and at times approaches closely to the *soma-sema* view of life which regards the body as the spirit's prison (Rom. vii, 24; viii, 23; 2 Cor. v, 4). The doctrine of original sin (Rom. v, 12), and the location of the evil principle in "the flesh" (Rom. vii, 5), are closely akin to Orphic teaching; and in his classic description of the struggle between flesh and spirit (Rom. vii, 15–18) his dualistic diagnosis is essentially Greek rather than Hebrew. Again, some would sense the influence of Paul's Greek environment in the glorification of certain ecstatic experiences, when he heard words which, as for the initiates in the Mysteries, "it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. xii, 3 f.). Similarly, several passages dealing with the subject of inspiration might be thought to reflect the idea, so characteristic of the Greek oracle, that the speaker of "inspired" words is but a mere passive instrument of the inspiring God. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. i, 21; cf. 2 Tim. iii, 16). The account in Acts of the Pentecostal "speaking with other tongues" is apparently connected with this conception, and is really a materialization of an allegory, the thought of inspired utterance being symbolically represented by the "tongues" of fire which rested on each of the disciples (Acts ii, 3–4). Such allegorization is, of course, essentially Greek.

VI. *Christology*

It is, however, in the realm of *Christology* and Soteriology that the Hellenistic influence is most evident. The recasting of the primitive Gospel under Hellenistic influence resulted in a new attitude to Jesus himself, or rather in a change of emphasis, whereby he was revered not as prophet and teacher, or even as Messiah, but as the Divine Lord who had supplanted the gods many and lords many of the Pagan world. Thus the author of 2 Peter, probably the latest document in our New Testament, can speak of " our God and Saviour Jesus Christ " (2 Pet. i, 1), which is the only quite unambiguous application of the title " God " to Jesus before the second century Greek writers Ignatius and Justin Martyr.[1] The smart contrast so often drawn between the primitive " religion of Jesus " and the later Hellenistic " religion about Jesus " is of course entirely misleading, for Jesus's teaching about God is rooted basically upon a personal consciousness of his own unique relationship to God, and cannot be separated from it. Yet it is certainly true that the centre of gravity has shifted from the Teaching to the Divine Person of the Teacher ; nor is it improbable that the exaltation of Jesus's Person is at least partly due to the influence of prevailing types of worship in the Hellenistic world, and to the tendency to regard union with the cult-saviour as the prime object of faith.

But the influence of Hellenism on Christology appears most prominently in the attempt to co-ordinate Christian doctrine, and make it intelligible to the Gentile world, by re-interpreting the meaning of

[1] Rom. ix, 5 is a questionable parallel.

Christ's person along the lines of the Logos-doctrine familiarized by the Alexandrian Philo, who combined Hebrew ideas of revelation with Platonic idealism and Stoic mysticism, and spoke much of a mediating agent between God and the world which, in common with all Greek philosophers, he called the Logos. Paul himself in his earlier letters does not make use of the Logos conception, but in Colossians and Philippians he shows himself obviously attracted by it. He speaks of Christ as pre-existent from eternity in "the form of God" (Phil. ii, 6), just as Philo calls the Logos the "shadow of God". "All things have been created through him" (Col. i, 16), and Philo makes the same claim for the Logos. In Christ, says Paul, "all things hold together" (Col. i, 17), while for Philo the Logos is "the unbreakable band of the universe". Similarly the writer to the Hebrews, though he too carefully avoids the distinctive term "Logos", insists that though God be the ultimate builder of all things (iii, 4) the actual building is accomplished through the Son (i, 2), exactly as Philo affirms that the Cosmos has God as its cause and the Logos as the instrument through which that Cause operates. The language of the prologue, wherein Christ is "the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of his substance" (i, 3), is thoroughly Philonic, and behind all the argument is the thought that Christ, as Logos, shares the very nature of God, and is thereby qualified to be the Mediator between God and man.

But it is in the Fourth Gospel that the re-interpretation of the Christian message in terms of Hellenism is brought to its climax. The Evangelist is no longer shy of using the technical word "Logos"; and

however close may be the affinities of the Prologue with prophetic and Rabbinic ideas of the "word" and the "wisdom" of God, the Alexandrian basis of its thought is undeniable. The key to the whole Gospel story is that Jesus is the incarnation of that Logos who had been "with God" from the beginning, and "through" whom "all things were made". And though the term Logos does not recur again in the body of the Gospel, its whole Christology is determined by the presupposition that Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnate Logos "tabernacling" as a pilgrim among men. Thus alone, for example, can be explained the references to Jesus's pre-existence (i, 15, 30; viii, 58; xvii, 5); his claims to have "descended out of heaven" (iii, 13) whither one day he is to re-ascend (vi, 62)—an interesting parallel to the Hermetic and Gnostic conception of the descent and ascent of the soul; and the great emphasis placed upon his omniscience (i, 42; ii, 24 f.; iv, 16; vi, 6; vi, 64; xvi, 30, etc.), and his power to determine his own course and his own fate (vii, 30; viii, 20; x, 39; xviii, 6, and especially x, 18). A very different picture, no doubt, from that given us by the Synoptic Gospels. Yet this transference of emphasis from Jesus's Teaching to his Person was only possible because the seeds of the new conception were already present in the original gospel.[1]

VII. *The Doctrine of Salvation*

It is, however, when we pass from Christology to *Soteriology* that the full flood of Hellenistic influence

[1] "It was precisely because Jesus was central to his religion and had been so from the first that the change became possible. Christianity was inherently a religion about Jesus" (E. F. Scott, *op. cit.*, p. 266).

is apparent. The salvation brought by Christ, instead of being related, as it originally was, to the Jewish apocalyptic scheme of a coming Kingdom of God introduced by a great day of judgment, is now conceived rather as a redemption of mankind from bondage to the evil forces of a lower material world ; salvation is not merely a deliverance promised for the future, but the present gift of a new kind of life guaranteed through mystical union with a Saviour-Redeemer. The characteristically Greek tendencies would seem to be as follows :—

(*a*) Salvation is now not national but *universal.* Paul, as an ardent and consistent cosmopolitan, stands much nearer to Stoic than to Hebrew tradition. He acknowledges himself a " debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians " (Rom. i, 14). His God is a God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews (Rom. iii, 29), who in Christ has " broken down the middle wall of partition " (Eph. ii, 14), so that " there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus " (Gal. iii, 28). From his master, Paul, Luke inherits this spirit of universalism, so that even within the limits of Jesus's own life, by picturing him in contact with Samaritans and Gentiles, he seeks to illustrate the world-wide scope of the Gospel. In the Fourth Gospel the universal significance of the Christian message is taken for granted. God's love is so world-wide (iii, 16 f.) that he sends his Son to be " Saviour of the world " (iv, 42), and to " bear away the sin of the world " (i, 29).

(*b*) Salvation is sometimes conceived *metaphysically* as well as ethically. In Jesus's own teaching the new relation to God consists in a renewal of will, whereby

a sinner "comes to himself" and "goes to the Father" (Luke xv, 17 f.). But to the Hellenist, with his belief in the soul's bondage to matter, a metaphysical change of nature is necessary, and the new life is thought of in terms of essence rather than of will. A renewal of nature must precede a renewal of will. Hence for the Fourth Evangelist the idea of the "Reign of God" disappears, and its place is taken by the promise of "eternal life", the assumption being that in God, the only "reality" (xvii, 3), and in the Logos who is the "light" revealing Him, there exists a "life", different in essence from mere physical life, which is the "real" or "eternal" life (i, 4 ; v, 26). In some passages this life might appear to be an almost semi-physical bestowment, particularly in the Eucharistic discourse in the sixth chapter (vi, 51–9). It would seem that men to possess "real" life must become incorporate with Christ and absorb his divine substance into their very nature. Even Paul would appear sometimes to come dangerously near to regarding Christ as an almost impersonal life force, which the Christian may "put on", "in" which he may "walk", and which "worketh in him mightily" (Rom. xiii, 14 ; Col. ii, 6 ; Col. i, 27). More emphatically still the author of 2 Peter declares that through God's "exceeding great promises" Christians "may become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter i, 4), while the writer of 1 John attributes the sinless life of one "begotten of God" to the fact that God's "seed abideth in him". This last idea becomes all the more pointed when we remember that the *logos spermatikos*, or "generative logos" (*σπέρμα* means seed ; see 1 John iii, 9) was a common Stoic term. An

almost exact parallel is 1 Peter i, 23, where the Christian is one who is "begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God". It is only with these ideas in mind that we can understand the emphasis of the Fourth Gospel on the necessity of a "re-birth" or a "birth from above"—a conception wherein, as we have already seen, Christian teaching approximates, at least superficially, very close to that of the Mystery Religions.

(*c*) Hellenistic too is the tendency to define salvation in terms of *knowledge* or enlightenment, especially in the knowledge of a "mystery which has been hid from all ages and generations, but has now been manifested" (Col. i, 26)—exactly the thought which we saw to underlie Hellenistic ideas of *gnosis*. "This is life eternal," says the Fourth Evangelist, "that they should know Thee the only true God, and him whom Thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii, 3), and the emphasis all through his Gospel upon the concept of "knowing" is obvious, even though it be rightly insisted that for John "knowledge" of God is primarily knowledge of His will and ethical character, rather than initiation into some esoteric Gnostic discipline. Similarly, though John never uses the word "faith", the "believing" upon which he constantly insists is of a much more intellectual type than the "faith" of Paul.[1] This intellectualization of faith is also very noticeable in the Pastoral Epistles, where "*the*

[1] "It implies not so much an inward disposition of trust and obedience, as the acceptance of a given dogma. To 'believe' is to grant the hypothesis that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God" (E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 267).

faith" (1 Tim. v, 8, etc.) becomes almost identical with orthodox belief, "the pattern of sound words ... the good deposit which was committed unto thee" (2 Tim. i, 13 f.). Moreover even the authentic Paul hints that this deepest knowledge of God cannot be communicated to all believers; it must be reserved for the "perfect"—τέλειοι—the very word used of those who had been initiated into the Mysteries (1 Cor. ii, 6). In Ephesians particularly there is a constant emphasis on "knowledge" as the chief end of the Christian life, so that "this Epistle is like the bridge between primitive Christianity and that more speculative type of religion which came to prevail after the close of the first century. ... It might almost appear as if the writer was in sympathy with the Gnostic view that the one means of attaining to true fellowship with God is intellectual enlightenment; to know God in the mystery of his being is to become one with him".[1]

VIII. *Sacramentalism*

Something has already been said about the possible influence of the Mystery Religions upon the New Testament *doctrine of the Sacraments*. The cardinal value attached to sacraments for salvation is certainly a legacy from Hellenism. From the earliest days Christianity had no doubt possessed its two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which had always been something more than mere symbolical rites. But once they were transplanted into an environment where redemption was thought to consist

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 184.

in a metaphysical change of nature, and rites were supposed to carry within themselves a mysterious efficacy, this miracle of regeneration almost inevitably became associated with the actual performance of the sacred rites, which now became sacraments in the full sense of the word. The analogy between Paul's conception of "dying with Christ in baptism" (Rom. vi, 3 ff.; Col. ii, 12) and Hellenistic ideas has already been discussed, and a warning was given against too lightly arguing from a similarity of terminology to an identity of doctrine. Other passages where Baptism is closely associated with the "putting on" of Christ (Gal. iii, 27), or the bestowal of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii, 13), or the saving of Christians "through the washing of regeneration" (Titus ii, 5), must be treated with a like caution. The influence of Pagan ways of thinking is more clearly traceable in Paul's strange allusion to the practice of vicarious baptism for the dead (1 Cor. xv, 29), which seems to have been an Orphic custom; in his hint that those who participate in pagan feasts have "communion with demons" (1 Cor. x, 21); and in his threat of dire penalties consequent upon an unworthy partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi, 29 f.). The Fourth Evangelist also employs highly sacramental language (especially vi, 51–8), and even though it be insisted that the spiritual interpretation of sacramental efficacy is for him primary (vi, 63), his desire to find a point of contact with the more realistic conceptions of his Hellenistic readers is undeniable. The sacramental interest also appears in the First Epistle (1 John v, 8). A high sacramental value is also attached to Baptism by the writer of 1 Peter (iii, 21).

IX. *Incipient Gnosticism*

Finally, the all-powerful Hellenistic environment of the New Testament is clearly reflected in much of the writers' *polemic*, particularly as it is directed against incipient *Gnosticism*, which was in fact an insidious attempt to entangle Christianity in Hellenistic-Oriental syncretism. It is significant that in his later letters Paul is much less concerned with his Judaizing critics than with the dangers which threatened his Gospel from the side of Gentile speculation ; and towards the end of the first century the modernistic heretics, who may have called themselves " Progressives ", appeared a far greater menace to orthodoxy than the Jewish " Reactionaries ". Hence perhaps the words of 2 John 9 : " He who progresses, and abides not in the teaching of Christ, has not God." We have already seen how Paul in his references to " principalities and powers " (Col. ii, 15, etc.) has Gnostic speculations in view ; indeed the main argument of Colossians is directed against some local Gnostic heresy of whose jargon Paul's language in ii, 18 is probably an echo. Later the Pastoral Epistles " enable us to see how church organization was in large measure the outcome of the early conflict with heresy ".[1] The Fourth Evangelist has been thought himself to have affinities with Gnosticism, particularly in his dualistic conception of both man and the world (i, 5 ; iii, 6, etc.), in his somewhat intellectualistic idea of faith, and in his insistence upon " knowing " God. But even more evident is his polemic against Gnosticism, especially when he stresses the true incarnation and humanity of the Logos Christ and the

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 196.

reality of his death, an emphasis which is even more prominent in the First Epistle (1 John ii, 22 ; iv, 2 f. ; v, 5 ff.). The whole Epistle, indeed, is written with the author's eye upon a heresy which can fairly confidently be identified with some form of Gnosticism. The Second Epistle also indicates that Gnosticism was making dangerous progress, and the Elder warns his readers against the risk of false teachers imposing themselves upon the Church in the guise of travelling evangelists (2 John 7 ff.). Jude's Epistle also appears to be directed against some kind of Gnostic heresy which denied the true lordship of Jesus (4), made pretence of great wisdom (16), separated men into two classes, probably the " material " and the " spiritual " (19), and set the laws of morality at defiance (7 f.). Second Peter, which is probably a later revision of Jude, was perhaps fabricated in the name of the first of the Apostles with the deliberate purpose of enlisting the authority of his name in the struggle against heresy.[1]

X. *Conclusion*

The influence of Hellenism upon early Christianity is often deplored, as if it paganized the primitive Gospel of Jesus. Yet there is much to be placed on the credit side of the balance. Greek ways of thought provided for the interpretation of the message of Jesus in its wider import new categories, which were much more adequate than the purely Jewish conceptions, in terms of which the Gospel had been originally

[1] " The orthodox Church and Gnosticism were in deadly conflict, and neither side was particularly scrupulous about its weapons " (E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament*, p. 229).

proclaimed. The Christian message was now able to relate itself to a larger world of intellectual and spiritual endeavour, so that we find the second century Apologists claiming that in Christian theology all the world's search after truth had reached its climax, and that the light that lighted every man, be he Hebrew, Greek, or Oriental, had blazed forth in full radiance in Christ. No doubt one may argue that the authentic teaching of Jesus is without traces of Greek thought, so that the Gospel of Paul and John must be admitted to be an essentially *new* Gospel. Yet it is the original principles of Jesus which still remain normative for the new interpretation. As Dr. E. F. Scott says admirably, "borrowing always goes hand in hand with a process of assimilation which transforms that which is borrowed," and the elements which the New Testament has derived from Hellenism have become very largely assimilated to the original teaching of Jesus of Nazareth and his Jewish Apostles. "So with all the beliefs which passed from Pagan religion into Christianity. We cannot regard them as mere accretions, for by their adoption into the new message they have become an integral part of it. Their meaning is now to be understood in the light of their Christian context." [1]

Hellenism not only provided the medium of a wide-world civilization in which Christianity was to be sown. It also, in ways which we have seen, prepared the soil. But there were at least two vital things which even the noblest religious thought of Hellenism could not provide. One was the concrete historical personality round whose character, life, and teaching the new Christian doctrine was concentrated, and thereby

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Gospel and its Tributaries*, pp. 277, 279.

gained a convincing reality which all its rivals lacked. The other was the sacrificial love for all mankind as children of one Father God, which from the first was the supreme motive power behind the Christian ethic, and now as then can alone lift the world from its despair. If one may borrow the words with which one of our foremost authorities concludes his brilliant study of Hellenistic Civilization, " those who laboured and were heavy laden were to welcome a different hope from any which Hellenism could offer." [1]

[1] Tarn, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Few archaeological discoveries have made so great a stir as have the Dead Sea Scrolls, whose study has already become a highly specialised department of scholarship. Certainly it has been a temptation to exaggerate their importance for New Testament research, and over-confident amateurs have too readily jumped to sensational but ill-considered conclusions. Our understanding of Christian origins has not in fact been revolutionized. A more sober verdict is that of Millar Burrows, whose book is probably still the best general survey : " After studying the Dead Sea Scrolls for seven years, I do not find my understanding of the New Testament substantially affected. Its Jewish background is clearer and better understood, but its meaning has neither been changed nor significantly clarified."

I. THE DISCOVERIES

(a) *The Qumran Caves*

It is unnecessary to retell the familiar story of the chance discovery of the first cave by an Arab shepherd boy, and of how after obscure and tortuous bargaining with the Bedouin the first precious finds came into the hands of responsible scholars. A brief description of the actual discoveries must suffice to lead up to some evaluation of the contribution made by the Scrolls to our understanding of the background of the New Testament.

The Wâdi Qumran is situated in the Judaean desert near the N.W. shore of the Dead Sea. Here Cave I was discovered in 1947. From it came seven leather

scrolls to be described later, as it is they which are of special importance for our purpose. It was not till the spring of 1949 that scientific excavations were carried out on the same site and fragments of some seventy more documents found. In February 1952 Bedouin found manuscript fragments in Cave II, close beside Cave I, and the following month scholars systematically explored more than 200 caves and fissures extending for some five miles high up along the rocky bluffs north and south of Khirbet Qumran. Though pottery was found in 25 caves, only Cave III produced written material—two scrolls consisting of thin rolled-up copper strip and containing a portentous list of treasures and their hiding places ! In September 1952, after another find by Bedouin, the caves and clefts at the foot of the cliffs were systematically explored, and Caves IV, V and VI produced manuscript fragments. In 1955 Caves VII-X were investigated, and finally in January 1956 Cave XI. Caves V, VI and VII-X produced only minor finds, but Caves IV and XI rival Cave I in importance, and the contents of these three caves will be described below.

(b) *The Monastery of Khirbet Qumran.*

Meanwhile scholars had been looking round for traces of some human settlement with which all these remains might be associated. They turned their attention to the remains of a building some 1,000 yards S.S.E. of Cave I on a plateau midway between the sea and the cliffs. This *khirbet*, or ruin, was already known to archaeologists and had in the past even been identified with the remains of Gomorrah, or with the " City of Salt " mentioned in Joshua 15 : 62. Five excavation campaigns between 1951 and 1956 made it clear that here were the ruins of a pre-Christian

monastic settlement, with large meeting rooms, benches and desks as if belonging to a scriptorium, and large water cisterns apparently for use in communal baptismal rites. Various objects found in the ruins, in particular an intact jar similar to those containing the scrolls in Cave I, linked the monastery quite certainly with the caves and the scrolls. Here had lived some community whose library at some time of crisis had been hidden in the caves.

(c) *Other finds.*

Other finds were made during the winter of 1951-52 in a group of caves in the Wâdi Murabbaa't, a gorge in the southern desert of Judaea east of Bethlehem. The most sensational find was a personal letter actually signed by Simon ben Kochebah or Kozebah, the leader of the ill-fated Second Jewish Revolt of A.D. 132-5. More significant for scholarship is a splendid scroll of the *Minor Prophets* from the second century A.D. From another unidentified quarter, presumably also in the Judaean desert, comes a collection of documents, the most important being another manuscript of the *Minor Prophets*, this time *in Greek*—apparently a lost recension of the Septuagint.

(d) *The Qumran Manuscripts.*

From all the Qumran caves together portions of well over 400 manuscripts have been recovered. But as already noted the most important manuscripts come from Caves I, IV and XI.

From Cave I come the first-discovered seven leather scrolls. There are *two manuscripts of Isaiah*, immensely important for Old Testament scholars as giving us a Hebrew text ante-dating by some three hundred years the standardized Massoretic text ; a *Commentary on Habakkuk*, in which the method of interpreting the

prophet throws much light on the beliefs of the community ; a collection of *Thanksgiving Psalms* ; an odd military manual called *The War between the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*; a *Roll of the Patriarchs*, which seems to be an elaboration or apocryphal version in Aramaic of stories from the Book of Genesis ; and the *Manual of Discipline*, a rule of creed and conduct for the Community. These manuscripts have all been preserved relatively intact.

By contrast Cave IV has yielded literally tens of thousands of fragments belonging apparently to between 300 and 400 manuscripts. About a third of these are biblical, and their importance again is that they provide us with material from practically every book in the Old Testament for sampling pre-Massoretic textual types. Specially valuable is a manuscript of *Samuel*, the text of which varies widely from the traditional text and often agrees with the Septuagint. As the latter was the Bible of most of the New Testament writers, this is of special interest to students of the New Testament as proving that the Septuagint may more often than has been supposed reflect a Hebrew text more ancient, and sometimes probably better, than that of the standard Hebrew Bible. Also from Cave IV came a large number of fragments of Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphical works in Hebrew and Aramaic. Particularly interesting, because of the book's importance for New Testament study, are some eight fragments of the *Book of Enoch*, all in Aramaic and related in a complex manner to the Greek and Ethiopic versions hitherto known. The book was evidently a prime favourite with the Qumran Community.

Finally from Cave XI came two very well preserved scrolls and fragments of several others, the contents of which have not at the time of writing been revealed.

II. THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY

While the biblical manuscripts are invaluable for Old Testament study, it is the non-biblical scrolls, with the light they throw on the life and thought of the Qumran community, that are most important for research into the background from which Christianity sprang.

(a) *Its archaeological history.*

The archaeology of the ruins and the character of the deposits, in particular the palaeography of the manuscripts, the pottery and the coins, have enabled us to reconstruct the history of the monastery and of the Community that dwelt there. Experts are not yet unanimous about the dates, but the majority opinion appears to be that the centre was founded towards the end of the second century B.C., during the reign of John Hyrcanus (135-104 B.C.)—certainly no later than the beginning of the first century. Twenty years after its foundation there arose as its leader the much revered "Teacher of Righteousness" or "Righteous Teacher" who, as set forth in the *Habakkuk Commentary*, was persecuted and exiled by a "Wicked Priest," also known as the "Prophet or Man of Untruth" or the "Man of Scorn," who is the villain of the drama and is commonly thought to represent the hated Hasmonaean Priest-King Alexander Jannæus (104-78 B.C.). This tyrant profaned the Temple by himself offering sacrifice, and when the people demonstrated against him he set his mercenary troops upon them and massacred several thousand. It may have been at this time that the Teacher with some faithful followers fled to Qumran, where he either founded a community or joined one already in existence. There ultimately he was confronted by his

arch-enemy and possibly suffered a martyr's death. The Community continued to occupy the monastery until the days of Herod the Great, when it was probably destroyed by the earthquake of 31 B.C. recorded by Josephus. There is then a gap of approximately a generation during which the Community was in exile. Only one coin of Herod (37-4 B.C.) has been found, but the series of coins begins again with Herod Archelaus (4 B.C.- A.D. 8), which suggests that in his reign the Community was re-established in the monastery. There it remained until the disastrous First Jewish Revolt against Rome (A.D. 66-70) when in A.D. 68 the monastery was again destroyed, probably, as coins again suggest, at the hands of the Tenth Roman Legion. After this no more is heard of the Community.

(b) *Its relation to the Zadokite Sect.*

The Community called themselves "Sons of Zadok" and were certainly closely connected and probably actually identical with the Zadokite Sect of Damascus with which we were already acquainted through the *Zadokite Manuscript*[1], a medieval document found at Cairo at the end of last century, whose contents have always been recognized to date from a very early period. Fragmentary copies of this work have now been found in the caves and thus link it definitely with the Qumran Community. It is generally known as the *Damascus Document* because it deals with the life of a Jewish sect at Damascus often referred to as "Covenanters" because of their use of the phrase "new covenant." It is a natural assumption that this is indeed the Qumran Sect and that the place of the latter's temporary exile

[1] See above pp. 109 ff.

after 31 B.C. was Damascus. This opinion seems confirmed by the fact that certain of the expressions used in the *Manual of Discipline* appear also in the *Damascus Document*. Both speak of the "new covenant," the "Teacher of Righteousness," the twofold Messiah "of Aaron and of Israel." The way of life and rules for conduct set forth in the *Manual of Discipline* and the *Damascus Document* are closely parallel, and the only possible conclusion is that with the "Covenanters" of Damascus and the Community of Qumran we are dealing with one and the same sect.

(c) *Its relation to the Essenes.*

How does the Qumran Community fit into the hitherto familiar pattern of Jewish sectarianism? Scholars now generally believe that it was a settlement, possibly the chief settlement, of the Essenes[1]. Such an Essene desert retreat, between Jericho and En Gedi, had in fact been mentioned by the Roman historian Pliny[2]. As J. M. Allegro has written, from what Pliny and Josephus tell us about the Essenes "their basic doctrines and many of their institutions are strikingly similar to those of the Qumran Sect, and correspondences are to be found in their novitiate, baptism, initiatory oath, common meals, healing arts, spurning of the world's riches. humility, continence, semi-determinism, angelology, doctrines of heavenly rewards and hell fire; their regard for the writings of the prophets as for the Law, allegorical exegesis, and the sanctity of their own sectarian works[3]." Thus even

[1] See above pp. 104 ff.

[2] *Nat. Hist.* V. xv. 73.

[3] *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 160.

before it was realized that Qumran was probably the site of an Essene settlement the internal evidence of the manuscripts had inclined scholars to assign them to an Essene authorship. In particular the *Manual of Discipline* fits in with and supplements so well what we already knew about the Essene way of life from Josephus, Pliny and Philo, that little doubt can remain that it was produced by an Essene community. Josephus tells us that the Essenes treasured certain esoteric books which the novices swore not to divulge. At Qumran we find a whole library hidden away as the day of doom approached in order to preserve them from unhallowed eyes.

(d) *New Light on the Essene Way of Life.*

We may then legitimately use both the *Damascus Document* and the Qumran *Manual of Discipline* to compose a much clearer picture than was hitherto possible of the Essene way of life. Indeed we are now justified in using the Scrolls to correct some features of the picture given to us by Josephus and Philo. For example neither of these writers gives any hint that the Essenes laid so much store by the eschatological interpretation of Scripture: according to Philo they were concerned with Scripture mainly as dealing with questions like the existence of God and the creation of the world and as containing ethical teaching. Again Josephus states that the Essenes did not offer sacrifices[1], and according to Philo, "they have shown themselves specially devout in the service of God, not by offering sacrifices of animals, but by resolving to sanctify their minds,"[2] thus suggesting

[1] *Antiq.* xviii 19.

[2] *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit*, par. 75.

that their religion was wholly spiritual rather than ritualistic. In fact there is archaeological evidence that the Qumran Sect had their own place of sacrifice, while the *Manual* shows that they were a " holy people " in the strictly ritualistic sense of that phrase.

What more do we learn from the Scrolls about the Essene way of life ? Their watchword was " unity," and they often call themselves the " Party of the Community." They shared all the necessities of life, took their meals communally, sang praises together and held their deliberations in joint session. Every entrant into full membership " mixed " all his belongings into the common pool. Yet this was not an egalitarian society, for we read often about " rank," and always it is the priests who take precedence. At the head of the Community there seems to have been a council of twelve laymen and three priests. For breaches of discipline there is an elaborately graded penal code, the punishment being either deprivation of rations or exclusion from the " purity of the Many," which meant temporary or permanent excommunication from full membership. Women and children had their place in the Community, for it is laid down that a lad may not take a wife till he is twenty, and there are rules for regulating family life and for assisting orphans and unmarried women in need ; and traces of female burials have been found.

There were several stages of initiation. During the first, of indeterminate length, the novice found his feet. Then, if approved by " the Many," he spent a year in the " Party of the Community " without yet sharing in the " purity of the Many." At the end of this period, if again approved for promotion, he entered the third stage, which again lasted one year, during which he was admitted to the " purity of the Many " but not yet to the Messianic Banquet. At the end of the year

he might be enrolled as a full member, be assigned a definite rank, "mix" his possessions in the common pool, take a full share in the counsels of the Community, and share in the Messianic Banquet. He had now entered into a binding covenant with God. This final initiation was probably sealed by a baptismal ceremony. But baptism was not only a rite of initiation, for various purification lustrations played a large part in the Sect's devotional life, as is evident from the large cisterns uncovered in the ruins of the settlement.

As for the daily life of the Community, apart from the usual domestic tasks some must have worked in the pottery work-shops, others in the large scriptorium where doubtless many of the Scrolls were penned, others would tend sheep and goats as the Bedouin do today. There is also evidence of interest in astronomy and astrology and in the reforming of the calendar: for the Qumran Sect were apparently observing a different calendar from that in use at Jerusalem. And continually day and night would be heard the recitation of the Law and the chanting of the *Thanksgiving Psalms* preserved in one of the first-discovered rolls. "Let the Many," we read, "keep awake in community a third of all the nights of the year, in order to read aloud from the Book and to expound judgement and to sing blessings all together."

III. LIGHT ON THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

(a) *John the Baptist.*

What light do the discoveries throw on the origins of Christianity? The Covenanters, like the Christians, expected an eschatological prophet recalling Deut. 18: 15-18; and to describe their own share in preparing the way for the Messiah they quote the

same passage from Isaiah (40 : 3ff.) as the Gospels apply to John the Baptist. It has been argued that John himself was an Essene, the evidence being his ascetic way of life, his baptismal rite, his family's association with " the hill country of Judæa " (Lk. 1 : 65). On the basis of Luke's statement (1 : 80) that the boy John " was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel " the guess has been made that he may have been adopted by the Qumran Community. As the son of a priest he would no doubt have been welcome and marked out for advancement. Much Essene thought and practice may, it is suggested, have found entry into the earliest Christian circles through those first disciples of Jesus who had previously been followers of John (John 1 : 35ff). Again the similarities between the Fourth Gospel and the Qumran literature might be explained by the contact in Ephesus of the author of the Gospel with the followers of John the Baptist mentioned in Acts 19 : 1ff. But though John may well have been in touch with Essene thought and practice, during his ministry his separation from the " purity of the Many " through his mixing with the crowds would make membership of any Essene community impossible. Nor, though there is a similar emphasis on the need for repentance, does there seem to be any direct relationship between John's baptism, which is much more akin to normal proselyte baptism and was not apparently repeated, and the daily lustrations of the Sect. Indeed any definite relationship between John the Baptist and the Covenanters of Qumran is pure conjecture, however attractive the theory undoubtedly is.

(b) *The Structure of the Church.*

As already noted the Sect claimed to be people of a " New Covenant," with reference doubtless to

Jeremiah 31 : 31. The *Manual* also calls them " those who choose the Way." In the New Testament both of these expressions are of course given a Christian application (Acts 24 : 14 ; Heb. 12 : 24). There are also certain obvious parallels between the structure of the early Church and the Essene Community. The ruling assembly of the latter, which consisted of all the fully-initiated members, are called the *Rabbim* or " the Many." This word appears in the New Testament as τὸ πλῆθος (A. V. " the multitude ") and describes the church members whenever they are gathered to take a decision—at the choice of the " Seven " (Acts 6 : 2, 5), at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15 : 12), at Antioch to receive the Apostolic decrees (Acts 15 : 30). Within " the Many " there was an inner circle of twelve laymen and three priests, representing the twelve tribes of Israel and the princes of the three clans of Levi. The Twelve Apostles are an obvious parallel, which we shall not force by accepting the suggestion that the prominent three, Peter, James and John, reproduce the three priests ! This inner circle, according to the *Manual*, is in the last days to " mete out punishment to the wicked," just as the Twelve are to " sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel " (Matt. 19 : 28). But there need be no direct dependence here ; the convention of twelve tribes provides the common factor and sufficiently explains the parallelism. The highest officer of the Community was the *m'bhaqqer* or " overseer," the prototype, it is suggested, of the New Testament " bishop." There is also an interesting similarity in the rules laid down for reconciling members who have quarrelled : " Let no one," says the *Manual*, " speak to his brother in anger. . . although he may reprove him . . . Indeed no man may bring a case against his fellow before the Many which has not

first been the subject of a reproof before witnesses." The parallel in Matt. 18 : 15-17 is quite remarkably close. There is no proof in all this of direct borrowing ; but weight is added to the always probable supposition that the first Jewish Christians were considerably influenced by Essene thought and practice. It is odd that the Essenes are never mentioned in the New Testament. As it is largely in polemical passages that the Gospels refer to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, can this silence about the Essenes be due to the fact that there was no such antipathy between the latter and the primitive church?

(c) *The Community of Goods.*

As we have seen, the fully initiated member of the Qumran Community " mixed " all his private property into the common pool. The Church in its earliest days made similar experiments in the sharing of goods, though they do not appear to have lasted for long (Acts 2 : 44ff.; 4 : 32ff.). But whereas at Qumran such communism was strictly obligatory, in the Church there can have been no absolute or even general rule. Barnabas's generosity is praised as if it were something exceptional, while Ananias is condemned not because he held on to his property, but because he pretended to have given it all when in fact he had kept back part. Yet even here there is an interesting parallel. For at Qumran it was only at the final stage of initiation that an entrant handed over his worldly wealth ; up till then it was entered to his credit in a register, and not yet " mixed " with the common pool.

(d) *Sacraments.*

The central liturgical rites of Sect and Church alike were baptism and the communion meal. The Sect's

daily lustrations had little in common with the Christian once-and-for-all rite of initiation. But the common meal of Qumran exhibits much similarity to the sacramental "breaking of bread" of the first Christians. Particularly interesting is the definitely eschatological character of both. They are a foretaste of the great Messianic Banquet in the coming kingdom of God (Mark 14 : 25 ; Luke 22 : 16, 18). The parable of the "great supper" in Luke 15 : 14-24 is told in reply to one who "sat at meat with" Jesus and said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God," and the parable ends with the words, "none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." The feast of the Covenanters is said to be for "the men of the Name who are invited to the Feast ;" and one Qumran fragment seems to imply that the Messiah himself is present at the meal. It is noteworthy too that in the *Manual* the partakers of the Messianic Banquet are to be seated and served strictly according to their respective rank. It seems more than coincidence that in the Gospels both of Luke (22 : 24-30) and John (13 : 12-16) Jesus' teaching in rebuke of those seeking places of honour in the kingdom should be spoken at the Last Supper.

All this is not to argue that in the Lord's Supper the Church simply adopted an Essene meal. The whole conception of a memorial to the Messiah's redemptive sacrifice of himself in order to seal a new covenant is something entirely original, though doubtless it owes something to the Passover ritual. But the Essene meal does provide a background for the custom of a common meal eaten frequently by a whole community in anticipation of the Messianic banquet. For here no adequate background is offered by the Passover, which was an annual ceremony, observed in the privacy of the family, and not an eschatological festival.

Finally at Qumran the Community seem to have followed a different calendar from that in use at Jerusalem. It has been suggested that, if they were influenced by Essene usage, Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper (if this was indeed a Passover) may have been following the old priestly calendar : the Synoptists reflect this chronology while John follows the regular legal calendar, some of the difficulties caused by the apparent contradiction between the two traditions being thus resolved. But this is very precarious and doubtful speculation !

IV. LIGHT ON NEW TESTAMENT THOUGHT

(a) *Language and Vocabulary.*

How far do the new discoveries help us to uncover the roots of New Testament thought ? But first a word about the language of the New Testament. We have in the Dead Sea Scrolls innumerable fragments of a literature in its original Semitic form and dating from an era from which our Hebrew and Aramaic sources have hitherto been almost non-existent. Many of them are written in the Aramaic which must have been the mother-tongue of Jesus himself. This is generally agreed to have been Palestinian Aramaic, for the study of which practically no contemporary material has hitherto been available. Now Qumran, and particularly the Aramaic scroll found in Cave I and described above as " an apocryphal version of stories from the Book of Genesis," has furnished New Testament philologists with rich new resources for the recovery of the language of Jesus. Of this scroll Matthew Black writes : " The new scroll is almost certainly our oldest written Palestinian Pentateuch Targum, probably dating to the first

century B.C. Both from a linguistic and literary point of view it is an invaluable witness to the Aramaic language and literature of the time of Christ "[1]. The importance of this is that large portions of the New Testament, though written in Greek, have an Aramaic substructure, and to capture nuances of meaning we must often dig beneath the Greek to the underlying Aramaic. We are now able, for example, to see the true meaning of such expressions as " on earth peace to men of (God's) favour," that is " to the elect community " (Luke 2 : 14) ; and " the poor in spirit " (Matt. 5 : 3) who in the *War Scroll* are contrasted with the " hard-hearted " and identified with " those perfect in the Way."

(b) *Johannine Dualism.*

Parallelism between the Scrolls and the New Testament is nowhere so clear as in the Gospel and Epistles of John. All the following ideas, so familiar in the Johannine vocabulary, are characteristic also of the sectarian writings : " eternal life," " the light of life," " sons of light," " to do the truth," " the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." According to Essene teaching the world is the battle-ground of these two spirits in a warfare which will reach its climax in the last days. Here the *War Scroll* constantly recalls the Book of Revelation. The " spirit of error " is Belial himself, the " Prince of Darkness," while the " spirit of truth " is sometimes called the " holy spirit " and is said to be appointed a " helper " to the children of light, a striking parallel to John's figure of the Paraclete. Everywhere the same " dualism " is apparent as in John, with repeatedly contrasted ideas : light and darkness, life and death, spirit and flesh,

[1] *New Testament Studies*, July, 1957, pp. 305 ff.

truth and error, love and hate. The same " love of the brethren," within a somewhat limited circle, is enjoined as in the Johannine writings, with the corollary that the Covenanters should " love not the world " (1 John 2 : 15), an implication made explicit in the Essene rule that one must " hate all the children of darkness " even as he must " love all the children of light." Finally the way into the kingdom is similar for the Covenanters and for John : " Unless one is born of water and the spirit," says Jesus, " he cannot enter the kingdom of God " (John 3 : 5) ; and in the *Manual* we have this : " God by his truth . . . will cleanse for himself the body of man, in order to consume every wicked spirit from the midst of his flesh, and to make him pure with a holy spirit from every wicked deed ; and he will sprinkle on him a spirit of truth like water for impurity."

(c) *Pauline Echoes.*

Some of the leading Pauline conceptions can be matched from the Scrolls. There is the same antithesis between " spirit " and " flesh," the latter for the Covenanter being exactly the Pauline " *sarx*," man's debased moral nature. Again, as for Paul, " justification " is not the reward of good works, but is an act of God's grace. " The covenant love of God is my eternal salvation," says the *Manual*, " and if I stumble in the crookedness of my flesh, my justification depends upon the righteousness of God, which is eternal." In the *Habakkuk Commentary* such " justification " is even related to the Teacher of Righteousness as Paul relates it to Christ. The text quoted by Paul, " the just shall live by faith," is explained as meaning that " he shall live by faith in the Teacher of Righteousness." But such faith in a teacher, if indeed

the words mean more than " by faithfulness to the Teacher," falls far short of Paul's faith in an act of atonement accomplished through the death of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. Once more like Paul the literature of the Sect has much to say about the " mystery " of God's dealings. Paul claims to " speak God's wisdom in a mystery " (I Cor. 2 : 7), and that " by revelation he made known unto me the mystery " (Eph. 3 : 3). In the *Habakkuk Commentary* it is said to be the Teacher of Righteousness " to whom God made known all the mysteries of the words of his servants, the prophets." But there is no parallel to Paul's claim that knowledge of such mysteries has not only been revealed to Christ, but has its very source in him, nor to his teaching that the " revelation of the mystery " (Rom. 16 : 25) has been made available not only to an elect Jewish sect, but even to the Gentiles, through the universality of Jesus' Messiahship.

(d) *Eschatology and Messianism.*

The most fruitful field of comparison between Essene and New Testament thinking is eschatology—the doctrine of the last days, the coming of the kingdom of God, the Messianic figures who are to usher it in[1]. Both Covenanters and Christians believed that the new age was at hand and that the powers of light and darkness were poised for the final battle. " Therefore," writes Paul, " take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day " (Eph. 6 : 13), while the *War Scroll* shows us the Sect drawn up in battle array and gives us what has been called a " liturgy of Armageddon." By the Covenanters the whole of Scripture is interpreted eschatologically, on a

[1] See articles by W. H. Brownlee in *New Testament Studies*, Nov., 1956, and May, 1957.

short view as applying to the events of their own day, which are regarded as themselves happening in the last days, and on a longer view to coming events which are glimpsed just over the horizon. As in the New Testament, eschatology is partially "realized," but the climax is still to come.

The Scrolls, like the New Testament, speak of several eschatological figures—the "Elijah" of Mal. 4 : 5, the "prophet like unto Moses" of Deut. 18 : 18, and a two-fold Messiah. By the Jews generally the first two were not identified with the Messiah (see e.g. Mark 8 : 27-29, John 1 : 19-21); the New Testament sees Elijah in John the Baptist, and both the prophet and the Messiah in Jesus. The Sect apparently looked for two Messiahs, for the phrase "Messiah of Aaron and Israel," which is found both in the *Damascus Document* and in the Qumran texts, means "the Messiah of Aaron and the Messiah of Israel"—a priestly Messiah who would restore pure worship for the elect, and a warrior Messiah, a prince of the house of David, through whom God would re-establish his kingdom. At the Messianic Banquet, as pictured in the *Manual*, both Messiahs are present, and it is the priestly Messiah, here as always, who takes precedence. The Gospels, of course, regard Jesus as the Davidic Messiah, without any priestly prerogatives. Some scholars have seen either Essene influence, or apologetic directed towards the Essenes, in the argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews that on Jesus, the Davidic Messiah, who was not of the line of Aaron, there had been bestowed an unique priesthood far surpassing that of the Aaronic order, so that in him the functions of both Messiahs had been fulfilled.

The Covenanters' habit of applying all Scripture eschatologically to events in their own experience or expectation throws much light on the similar practice

of the New Testament writers. The way in which the latter re-interpret, sometimes mis-interpret or even arbitrarily alter, prophetic passages to serve their own ends, is now seen to be no new departure. There is no real parallel to it in either Rabbinic or Philonic exegesis ; but in the Qumran texts we see exactly the same process at work. A verse may be quoted out of context with a word or a phrase altered or added here and there to make it suit better whatever the writer intends it to illustrate. Good examples from the New Testament are Matt. 2 : 6 and 13 : 35 quoting with such adaptations Micah 5 : 2 and Ps. 78 : 2 respectively ; and Romans 3 : 20 with Gal. 2 : 16 where Paul echoing Ps. 143 : 2 deliberately adds the words " by the works of the law " to make the quotation fit his argument. One example must suffice from the *Habakkuk Commentary*. In Hab. 1 : 13 the prophet speaking to the Lord says, " why dost thou look on faithless men, and art silent when the wicked swallows up the man more righteous than he?" But the commentator wishes to make the words refer to some traitors to the Sect who stood idly by while the Teacher was being persecuted by the Wicked Priest. He therefore alters " why dost thou look," referring to the Lord, to " why do you look," though in the first part of the verse he has rightly quoted the second person singular, " thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil," thus making nonsense of the sequence. We also have examples of " composite " quotations such as are found in Mark 1 : 2-3 or 1 Peter 2 : 6-10. And finally there has turned up a document containing a collection of Messianic *testimonia* or proof-texts, some of them the same as are applied to Jesus in the New Testament, such as scholars have long suspected that the New Testament writers may have possessed. This, as well as the composite quotations, lends

some support to C. H. Dodd's theory[1] that there existed in the early church a collection of easily quotable passages grouped together for apologetic purposes under various topical headings. At any rate the Scrolls have given us evidence of such a pre-Christian collection of eschatological *testimonia*.

V. JESUS AND THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The fact that certain passages in the Scrolls seem to attribute to the Teacher a near-Messianic status has inevitably provoked comparison with the claims made for Jesus in the New Testament. Only quite irresponsible " scholars " have ventured to hint that the Jesus of the Gospels may be a mere legendary reflection of a historic Essene teacher. But others have not hesitated to insinuate that Jesus was after all nothing much more than a replica of the Teacher, playing a similar rôle and speaking with no greater authority, Paul as usual being the villain of the piece who has transformed the faith of a simple Galilean Rabbi into a mystery religion. As for the Messianic dignity foisted upon Jesus, were not exactly the same claims made for the Teacher before him?[2]

In fact it is quite uncertain how in the thought of his followers the Teacher was related to the various expected Messianic figures. It seems likely that he was identified with the " Elijah " of Mal. 4 : 5, and the *Damascus Document* by giving him the title of " law-giver " probably means to describe him as the " prophet like Moses " of Deut. 18 : 15. Jesus, particularly in Matthew's portrait, is of course also

[1] See his book, *According to the Scriptures*.

[2] See e.g. E. Wilson, *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea* : and A. Powell Davies, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

presented as the giver of the New Law. It is doubtful whether the Teacher is ever definitely identified with either of the two Messiahs. The Sect looked for the coming of a priestly Messiah in the last days, and the fact that in the *Damascus Document* this expected Messiah is also called a " Teacher of Righteousness," has suggested that they thought of him as none other than the priestly Leader of the Community risen again from the dead. On the other hand another text contains the sentence, " from the day the Teacher of the Community died until the Messiahs of Aaron and Israel arise," which seems clearly to distinguish the Teacher from either Messiah—unless indeed we are to assume that one or the other is the Teacher *redivivus*. But there is in fact nowhere any explicit identification of the Teacher with the expected Messiah-Priest, still less any real evidence that the Essenes believed that the Teacher would rise from the dead.

It has been argued that the Teacher, like Jesus, appears in the rôle of the suffering servant of the Lord. Certainly in the scroll of *Thanksgiving Psalms* we have such statements as this, presumably with reference to the Teacher : " As for me, thy servant, thou hast favoured me with the spirit of knowledge," which seems to reflect Is. 42 : 1. But this need be no more than the language of conventional piety, and there is but the slightest evidence that the Teacher, though martyred, was considered to have suffered voluntarily and vicariously in his own person for the propitiation of sin. The suffering-servant motif is evident, if at all, in references to the persecuted Community, which is undoubtedly regarded as the God-given means of atonement for the nation. But it is probably still true, *pace* Jeremias and other recent writers, that there is no evidence that Judaism in any of its sects anticipated Christianity in uniting in one

Person the attributes of both the Messiah and the suffering servant. When Jesus chose the self-designation " Son of Man " and took on himself the rôle of the suffering servant, he was redefining Messiahship by combining two conceptions which in origin were not Messianic at all.

Conclusions.

From our study of the Scrolls two main conclusions may be drawn. First, it has become increasingly evident that much in the New Testament that has been attributed to Hellenistic or Philonic-Jewish influences can be adequately explained in terms of Palestinian Judaism. This is particularly true of the Fourth Gospel. The reaction which has been in process during the past two or three decades thus gains even greater impetus. There is indeed a risk of the pendulum swinging over too far. For it must never be forgotten that first-century Judaism, even in Palestine, was itself deeply infiltrated by Hellenistic influences. The late Dr. Wilfred Knox recently warned scholars against falling into what he regarded as a positively disreputable " pro-Semitism " in New Testament studies ; and David Daube in his recent volume *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* has emphasised again the extent to which Hellenistic modes of thought had invaded what has been known as " normative Judaism." Oscar Cullmann has put forward the interesting hypothesis that " a bridge between the Essenes and early Christians is to be found in the *Hellenists* who are mentioned in the Book of Acts," and holds that the latter are " Jews who differ from the official Judaism, showing tendencies more or less exotic of a syncretistic origin "[1] ; and he has argued

[1] *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74 (1955), pp. 220-224.

elsewhere that the Gospel of John, which we have seen to have so much affinity with the Essene literature, is particularly interested in these Hellenists. It was a Hellenistic world in which Christianity took root and to which, even within the New Testament, we see it adapting itself ; and Hellenism must still be regarded as a " tutor " who had a large share in preparing the world, even the Jewish world, for Christ.

Finally, the chief importance of the Qumran Covenanters, their literature and their Teacher, is not that they shed new light on the teaching, work and Person of Jesus, but rather that they give us a vivid picture of the kind of religious community-life and organisation with which the earliest Christian church must have had many affinities. As for the suggestion that comparison with the Teacher of Righteousness detracts from the originality of Jesus' teaching and dims the majesty of his Person, it is enough to quote Oscar Cullmann : " Is it not significant that Josephus and Philo can both describe the Essenes in detail without once mentioning the Teacher of Righteousness? . . . Would it be possible to describe primitive Christianity without naming Christ?"[1].

[1] *ibid.* p. 225.

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